

# PURLEY PARISH NEWS



*May your unfailing love  
rest upon us, O LORD,  
even as we put our  
hope in you.*

*Psalm 33:22 (NIV)*

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For the Church & Community of  
PURLEY ON THAMES



# St Mary the Virgin

## Purley on Thames

www.stmaryspurley.org.uk

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If you are new to the area and would like to subscribe to Purley Parish News, please contact either Steve Corrigan or Les Jamieson.

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All contributions to this magazine are welcome, 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 email size restrictions.

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## FROM THE CURATE

On my return to church after a three-month Sabbatical, the first thing most people said to me after, "It's good to see you back" was, "You look really well." It occurred so many times that I began to be concerned as to what I must have looked like before I went!

Of course that is the purpose of a Sabbatical. It is a period away from your normal routine - a time to immerse yourself in a different environment, a chance to see your life from a different perspective, a time of refreshment.

I read recently in a newspaper that a life coach wrote, "Taking a break from the routine of a high pressure work life is essential if you are going to connect deeply with the dreams that can inspire you on the next stage of your journey. To create the life of your dreams, you must slow down and listen to what your heart and soul are trying to tell you".

In the church this can be translated as taking time out to be connected with God: to seek his purpose for our lives on the next stage of our Christian journeys and in order to live God's way, to slow down and listen to what He is trying to tell us.

How is this achieved? Well it usually means that a person will spend some time in retreat, undertake some study and take time to do something that will physically refresh and renew them. That was certainly the situation for me as I was also able to spend some weeks in New Zealand and the South Pacific.

While in both places, my husband and I were able to find God afresh in many visually stunning places. We visited many different churches, learning much from each of them. In New Zealand, we were made welcome by churches that had a regular minister and by churches that could not afford one. Consequently, they exercised a completely collaborative ministry. Everything within their services was done by lay people. A "local" non-stipendiary minister was shared between groups of churches and visited only to celebrate Holy Communion. Even in those churches with a minister, he or she was supported throughout the services by lay people exercising their gifts.

On the South Pacific Islands we were privileged to meet many Christians and to worship with them. Good Friday was the most memorable day, when the chief of the small village of Nabukeru on one of the Yasawa Islands (inhabited by only 60 people) invited all 100 passengers of the ship that we were on, to share in their worship. We were enthralled by the wonderful harmonies and melodies of the choristers singing familiar hymns in the Fijian language and eagerly joined in, singing in English when we could recall the words.

The language of the preacher wasn't a barrier either, as his *fire and brimstone* approach, together with a great amount of head shaking and finger pointing left us in no doubt that we were not to swim, or to buy or sell anything on Good Friday! I was particularly touched by the Fijian lady who seeing my distress with the suffocating heat passed her palm fan along the benches until it reached me. But of course, even though the ladies made them I could not buy one on that day!

Then on Easter Sunday, whilst swimming in a turquoise coral lagoon a fellow passenger said to me "If I was God I'd keep this place all to my self!" What better way and day to remember that God gave His everything on Good Friday, kept nothing back as He gave us His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross.

It was wonderful to be still, and to look and listen to God speaking through so many different and unforgettable experiences.

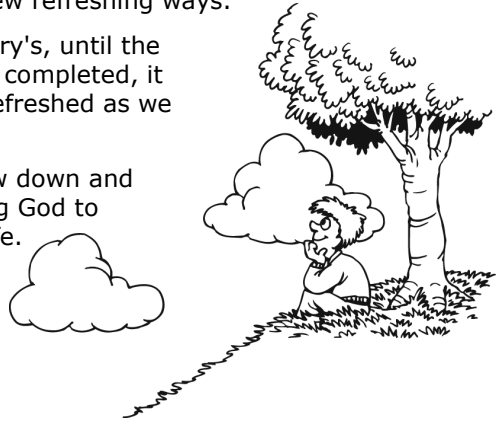
Has it made a difference? Most certainly!

Apart from the physical refreshment, through the beauty of the scenery and the warmth and friendliness of all the people we met, we were reminded of just how much God loves us all, whoever we are and wherever we live. While the different styles of worship and being removed from our familiar routine opened our eyes to experiencing God in many new refreshing ways.

As we are now without a Rector at St Mary's, until the selection process for a new incumbent is completed, it was a superb opportunity for me to be refreshed as we enter this busy period in our church life.

I do hope that you may find ways to slow down and create the life of your dreams by allowing God to meet with you as you journey through life.

*Jean*



## PARISH REGISTER

### FUNERAL

30 April

Michael Wade (service in church and burial at Beech Road)

# CHAMPION'S CHALLENGE!

**St Mary's Church Holiday Club  
11-15 August 2008**

9.30am-1.30pm each day  
Cost £30 for the week

Open to all Primary School  
aged children

Registration open from 1 July  
For a registration form please contact:  
Anna Saverton (942 8351) or Sally Robertson (962 5978)

## CHURCH SERVICES

8 June		No services at St Mary's Purley (see below)
15 June	9.30am	Family Communion
	11.15am	Morning Worship
	6.00pm	Evening Worship <b>with talk by Kim Facer of Purley Park</b>
22 June	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
29 June	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
6 July	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion

## WORSHIP IN THE WILLOWS

ACT (All Churches Together in Berkshire) Pangbourne District would like to welcome you to *Worship in the Willows* on Sunday 8 June at Pangbourne Meadow. This is an annual event where all the churches in the area get together to worship God. The service starts at 11am and is followed by lunch to which everyone is invited. We will be joined as usual by the local Scout, Guide and Brownie groups.

The theme this year is *One Big Family*. God has adopted us all, every one of us. If that isn't a cause for celebration, what is? We plan to celebrate our togetherness by inviting people with learning disabilities to take part in our service. The Speaker will be David Bendor-Samuel, from Causeway Prospects, a local Christian charity that encourages people with learning disabilities to live their lives to the full.

Come yourself, and invite your neighbours and friends with learning disabilities to share that experience of being *One Big Family*. Let's find ways to celebrate together and learn from each other.

*Christine Mackie*

## CELEBRATIONS

One of our regular contributors saw the following church bulletin blooper:

*The curate will be celebrating for the next fortnight whilst the rector is on holiday.*

We expect Andrew and Jean to be doing the same, now that Roger has left us!



## PLANT SALE

We held a successful Plant Sale on Saturday, 12 May with a lovely sunny day. The Society is very grateful to all the customers who supported us and hope you are all pleased with the plants.

## BALL COLEGRAVE SUMMER OPEN EVENING, ADDERBURY, BANBURY

The grounds are open to the public on Wednesday, 30 July from 4-8pm and you will be able to see the various types of new plants they are developing. If we can get a group of 20+ people interested, we can purchase tickets in advance at £1 per person instead of £2. You will need your own transport for this visit, but we will try to organize a car-share scheme. Anyone interested please contact Jim Armstrong on 942 1645 for more details

## TRADING

The Trading Store in the Memorial Hall Car Park is open every Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 11am until the end of October. Membership of the Society is only £1.50 for a year with items at lower prices than most other sources. Further savings can be made at various other nurseries (details at Trading Store).

## MEMBERSHIP

A considerable number of our members have not yet renewed their membership for 2008 and we would be most grateful if you could do so as soon as possible. New members are very welcome to join us and this can be done at the Trading Store.

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

Schedules for the Show to be held in Purley Memorial Hall on Saturday, 6 September will be available shortly at the Trading Store.

## THURSDAY 10 JULY 2008 HAMPTON COURT PALACE FLOWER SHOW

At the height of summer, one of the world's most famous royal palaces plays host to the sumptuous Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. The Hampton Court Palace and surrounding parkland provide an idyllic setting for the world's largest horticultural show, where gardeners of Purley can see, smell and touch an abundance of floral delights.

Cost £36 per PHS member. Applications by Sunday 15 June.

## TUESDAY 22 JULY 2008 TWO VERY SPECIAL GARDENS

*The Peto Garden, Iford Manor, Near Bradford on Avon*

This award winning Grade I Italianate garden, famous for its tranquillity and beauty, was the home of Edwardian architect and landscape gardener, Harold Peto, from 1899-1933. Unique and romantic, he created the garden using his vast collection of architectural fragments on this steep sided wooded valley set beside the River Frome.

*Lady Farm Gardens, Chelwood*

This remarkable garden has been imaginatively shaped and planted by the owner, Judy Pearce. She calls it her steppe garden and indeed it is characterised by low species that thrive in hot, dry summer temperatures and sub-zero winter ones.

Both these gardens will open for our exclusive visit and the owners will give us a guided tour. Cost is £24.50. Applications by Sunday 22 June.

Full details and application forms for all events are available in the PHS Trading store beside the Memorial Hall or you can print via [www.purleyonthames.net](http://www.purleyonthames.net) > Online Notice Board or Purley Groups and follow the links.

I hope you all have a successful gardening year.

*Marion Dabbs*  
942 2349



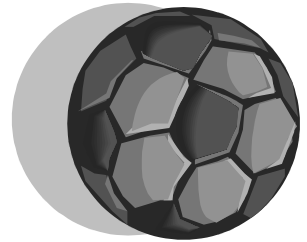
# YOUTH CLUB

## PURLEY PARK SOCIAL CLUB

Are you aged 10-14?

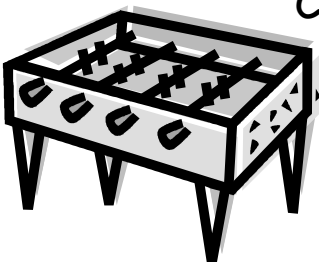
Come along to  
Purley Park Social Club for  
free and fun activities!

13 June, 11 July and 8 August 2008



Courtesy of Purley Parish Council

Telephone 0118 984 3162 for  
details or just pop in any time  
from 6.00-8.00pm!



# Pray for Purley

We had an enjoyable time at our May meeting, praying for many matters affecting the lives of Purley residents and enjoying talking over fish and chips.

Future sessions were agreed as follows:

Mon 16 June	8.00pm at 5 Brading Way
Wed 16 July	10.30am at 12 Church Mews
Tue 16 Sep	8.00pm at St Mary's
Sat 18 Oct	8.00am at St Mary's (breakfast – NB: Not 16 Oct!)
Sun 16 Nov	7.15pm at St Mary's

All are welcome to any or all of these times – whether you've been before or not. You don't have to attend St Mary's (members of five churches were at our May meeting) or even be a regular churchgoer – just have a concern for our village and want to talk to God about it.

For more information, please contact either of us below:

Nan Craig	Tel: 942 8266	4 St Mary's Avenue	<a href="mailto:nan.craig@btinternet.com">nan.craig@btinternet.com</a>
Chris Rayers	Tel: 942 1880	9 Allison Gardens	<a href="mailto:c.rayers@talk21.com">c.rayers@talk21.com</a>

## Strawberry Teas in the Garden Sunday 22 June 1.30-5.30pm



All in aid of St Mary's Church

Strawberry Themed Food, Teas & Cakes

Browse around the  
Rose Walkway ~ Wildflower Meadow ~ Vegetable Garden ~ Fruit Cage

Excellent plant & produce stalls

Activities for children



## At Cherry Acre

Purley Village (opp. Infant School)



## **PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE**

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

### **CRIME IN WEST BERKSHIRE FALLS BY 12.6%**

There have been a thousand less victims of crime in West Berkshire this year. That was the standout statistic from Supt Chris Shead at a media briefing to discuss the end of year British Crime Survey Statistics.

He revealed that BCS crime had fallen by 12.6% between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008 and that all crime had fallen by 8.1% during the same time.

He said "Overall, a 12.6% reduction year on year is pretty good and I am pleased with the efforts everyone has made this year to make this happen. Our reduction is the fifth best right across the Force.

"What this means to the people on the streets is that there has been a thousand less victims of crime this year."

Highlights of the figures include an 18.3% reduction in criminal damage; a 20% reduction in theft from vehicle; an 11.3% reduction in burglary; a fall of 32.3% fall in theft of pedal cycle and an 11.8% reduction in vehicle interference.

Supt Shead was also pleased with improvements that have been made in detections this year. He said, "In terms of detection performance we have had the best improvement of any of the LPAs across the Force. We have solved almost 5% more crimes this year than last, with an overall detection rate of 24.2% this year compared to 19.8% last year. In real terms we have detected 313 more crimes than last year."

Supt Shead believes that improvements seen in the LPA this year don't just stop with facts and figures. He said, "I think the quality of the service we have delivered has improved and I think this can be shown by the numbers of complaints having fallen while letters of recognition have increased throughout the year.

"We have piloted attendance at all crimes and the feedback we have received from the public so far is positive and seeing a member of the police service reassures them.

"Overall it has been a very successful year and the challenge for us now is to build on what we have achieved. This will not just be down to the police – it is the whole partnership. It has long been recognised that we cannot achieve these results alone."

## PURLEY WI

Traditionally May is the month when we meet to discuss the Public Affairs Resolutions that will be presented at the N.F.W.I. AGM, which takes place in Liverpool on 4 June 2008. Two subjects this year: Inappropriate imprisonment of the severely mentally ill, and the ban on bottom-trawling in the fishing industry, and the subsequent environmental destruction to the sea bed. Introduced by Janet Southall and Daphne Howard, we had much to think about, and after discussions on both subjects, members were substantially in favour of both resolutions to be backed by the WI.

During May, we provided an afternoon tea for a coach party following a request from Otterbourne WI. A glowing letter of appreciation from the ladies was read out at the meeting, thanking us for our hospitality, and the promptness of the delivery of multiple cups of tea; so badly needed as they were approaching a state of dehydration!

Following on from the notices, which included a change to the July meeting (this will now be a talk by Corry Starling from Mapledurham Mill), we enjoyed some Cheese and Wine. To conclude the evening on a lighter note, a short Quiz on Song Lyrics produced some very interesting and impromptu performances of songs, old and new.

Flower of the Month Competition was won by Jan Maybank.

Next meeting: 11 June, 7.30pm at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley.

Mrs Ruth Lenney will speak on *Love and Marriage in Art*. Visitors welcome.

Next Farmers' Market: 14 June at The Barn.

*Lesley Honnor*

## PURLEY VILLAGE CELEBRATIONS

### **SATURDAY 23 AUGUST & SUNDAY 24 AUGUST**

On the August Bank Holiday weekend, local organizations are coming together to host a weekend of events held at the Recreation Ground, Goosecroft Lane.

Events on this weekend will include a music and entertainment extravaganza, bringing together all the talented groups that perform regularly in Purley in one performance held in the barn on Saturday night.

On the Sunday, a number of events are to be held including an exhibition by Project Purley, stalls, games, delicious food and, of course, some liquid refreshment available in Purley Sports and Social Club. We are looking for any local groups or residents who are willing to help out with this and have any great ideas of what we can do to make this a brilliant and successful event.

Although the exact entertainments available are yet to be finalized, they are to include: a coconut shy, a 5-a-side football tournament, an egg throwing competition, bouncy castle, and much more!

Money raised is to be split between local charities.

More details will be available over the next couple of months, so please keep an eye out around the village and in the Parish magazine for information.

If you or your local organization would like to be involved in the events in some way, whether running a stall or sharing a brilliant idea, please feel free to contact Charlotte Bishop on [cbishop@westberks.org](mailto:cbishop@westberks.org) or 07876 033070.

I look forward to seeing you at what should be a fantastic event for the village of Purley.

## ITEMS FOR SALE

### KOI CARP + FILTER PUMP

12 Healthy KOI ranging from 7" TO 22", various colours, plus other fish, £450 ono. Call 07956 913396

## AND A SLIGHTLY LARGER ITEM...

### DO YOU NEED A BIGGER HOUSE?

Pam Fisher is downsizing and needs to dispose of her large 4 Bed family home at 27 Nursery Gardens for a sensible price. Call 984 3643 or take a look.



# Purley Pre-School Summer Fayre

**Saturday 5th July  
12.00pm to 3.00pm**

**Purley Memorial Hall  
Glebe Road**



Fun for all the family including:  
Bouncy Castle, Tombola's, BBQ, Puppet Show, Assorted Stalls

Come and support your local Pre-School

Admission: 20p per person

# 1<sup>ST</sup> PURLEY AND PANGBOURNE SCOUT GROUP



You may have heard on the news or read in the papers recently that the popularity of Scouting is once again on the increase so you will not be surprised to hear that 1<sup>st</sup> P&P have a full complement of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts prepared to take part in and enjoy a varied programme of activities.

Since September the Beaver Colony which is for 6-8 year olds, has been run by Judie Pickering who is, primarily, our Cub leader so has had her work cut out running both sections. The Beavers have celebrated the birthday of A A Milne, by playing Pooh Sticks and making honey sandwiches; they made and sampled tasty shortbread for Hogmanay. The Police visited to talk about Stranger Danger and practice using the Green Cross Code and, at Easter, the task undertaken was to make a basket in which to collect eggs and then capture as many as possible in an Easter Egg Hunt.

1<sup>st</sup> P&P Cubs finished 2007 in style by attending a Banquet and Karaoke evening attired in smart eveningwear. They were greeted with a glass of *champagne* and then sat down to melon, sausage and chips and chocolate fudge cake. The Karaoke that followed revealed the hidden talents of many possible stars of tomorrow. In the New Year attention turned to aspects of a Global and Caring Challenge. These included looking at the impact of Fair-Trade products and produce and thinking of ways to help others less fortunate than ourselves. To this end, 1<sup>st</sup> P&P Cubs held a mini Bazaar. Each *six* had to create a stall and then supply and staff it to raise money for YES Project. Everyone came up trumps and the stalls included a cocktail bar, raffles, tombola, caricatures and a lucky dip. The evening was well attended and raised £146. As the weather is improving thoughts have turned to traditional outdoor scouting activities and preparations including navigation skills and creating personal first aid kits lead to a muddy night hike through Sulham woods, across fields and finishing at the village hall in Pangbourne.

It is particularly gratifying to see a full attendance at meetings of the Scout Section for 10½-14 year olds showing their appreciation of the varied programme they follow. This has included Wide games in the woods, pancake tossing, soap carving, an evening in ancient Rome and an indoor hockey tournament. One of the key parts to the programme this year has been to undertake the *Fitness Challenge*. This involved the need to devise and follow a training schedule culminating in taking part



in the Green Park Challenge which is a 3km run held before the Reading Half Marathon meaning a very early start on a chilly Sunday morning. Scouts could be seen regularly about Purley and Pangbourne as they completed their lengthy training runs, and apart from keeping a log of their increasing fitness and

actually completing the run, several Scouts were also sponsored and so we managed to raise £115 for our chosen charity, the YES project.

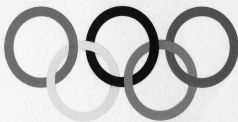
Sunday 26 April started with an horrendous rain storm but members of 1st P&P were prepared to commemorate St George's Day with other groups from the Pang Valley by re-affirming their Scout Promises at the village hall in Pangbourne. An informative talk about the history of St George was followed by a selection of quiz walks round and about Pangbourne where scouts used their observational and general knowledge skills as well as completing a healthy walk in the glorious sunshine.

Following the success of the *Family Bingo Evening* last year we decided to combine our AGM with a *Family Quiz Night*. Scouts and Cubs, who cooked large numbers of sausages on camp stoves for all, provided the catering. Attendance was very high and the business of the AGM was conducted swiftly but we only recruited one new member to the executive committee so if anyone you know is interested please contact us as we still have places to fill. The quiz stimulated the grey matter fully including questions testing local knowledge, sport, music and lateral thinking. A raffle was held, raising over £30 for the YES project.

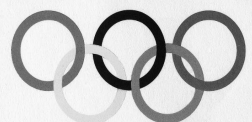
1<sup>st</sup> Purley and Pangbourne Scout Group support the Youth Education Support (YES) Project. This is a non-profit-making organisation, which meets the educational and welfare needs of children in Nairobi, Kenya, who have been orphaned by AIDS. The project is run by two Scout Leaders and as such, not only has its own Scout Group, but the project itself is run based on the principles and methods of Scouting. Through our various events, over £350 has now been donated and will fund a years school fees for at least 3 children.

1<sup>st</sup> Purley and Pangbourne Scout Group will be serving bacon rolls at the Pangbourne Fete on 7 June at Pangbourne Meadows. We look forward to seeing you there to sample our wares.

## **Come and join the fun at this year's Purley Infant School Summer Fair**



**12 July 2008  
3.00 – 5.30**



**auction \* raffle \* tombola \* lucky dip \* coconut shy  
duck game \* football \* making table \* BBQ  
pocket money stall \* bar \* marbles game  
card game \* face painting**

**Entry fee: 50p per adult, free entrance for children**

## PURLEY PATHFINDERS - A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

One of the loveliest villages nearby in late Spring/early Summer is Bradfield, so during our year of villages we met at Rushall Farm in Bradfield to walk through their lovely woods where the new leaves on the trees looked so fresh. To enhance the scene even more, several bluebells were already in flower amongst the wood anemones, and flocks of sheep awaiting the birth of their lambs, grazed in the fields on either side. Leaving the woodland, we crossed a field, which transported us back to childhood days, for it was covered in the delicate yellow blooms of wild primroses – magical. Eventually we arrived at Bradfield village with its attractive buildings nestled around the River Pang and the mill, and its church standing prominently on higher ground. From here, a pretty path beside the Pang took us back to Rushall Farm where we found a nice place to picnic in the sunshine with lovely views over the Pang Valley.

In late April, we set off on our Spingtime Special. We boarded our coach in pouring rain, but soon we were driving in sunshine, which just got hotter and hotter throughout the day! After coffee served in the Gateway Centre, overlooking one of the lakes of the Cotswold Water Park, we began our walk, which took us beside some of the 145 lakes that make this the largest complex of man-made lakes in Britain. With each lake having its own special atmosphere, this made for interesting and attractive walking, especially as each lake supports a wide range of wildlife. Next, we walked along a dismantled railway, a pleasant hedge-lined path where birds and butterflies added to our pleasure. Eventually we reached the banks of the infant Thames. We followed its meandering route through the water meadows to reach North Meadow. This National Nature Reserve is one of the finest examples of lowland hay meadow in Europe and it was a privilege to walk in it on this day in April when the Snake's Head Fritillary were at their peak – an amazing sight! North Meadow supports the largest population of this nationally scarce wild flower and they formed a purple haze over the meadow.

Refreshed after a picnic beside the Thames we continued into Cricklade, the first town on the Thames. Described as *the most intact example of a late Saxon town in Britain*, we walked past some of its interesting 115 listed buildings via the listed Town Bridge. Cricklade was voted the winner of *Best Small Town* in the floral competition in 2007, and we enjoyed their floral displays, which have won them a place in the final for 2008. Passing the old Priory; Wiltshire's only Medieval Church, St Mary's; the ancient Market Cross, and the Jubilee Clock built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, we reached St Sampson's Church. Inside this stunning church, a highlight was to stand beneath the huge tower for which the church is famous, being a landmark for miles around. Outside we found a second Market Cross. One is the original, moved from the High Street where it was an obstruction to modern day traffic, and one is a replica. Some rivalry exists between St Mary's and St Sampson's as to which is the original! Our coach met us to take us out of



Cricklade to Blunsdon Station where we were met by some of the enthusiastic team of volunteers who are restoring the railway. A stretch from Blunsdon to Hayles Knoll has been completed so we climbed aboard our awaiting steam train, which took us on a scenic, nostalgic ride. At Hayles Knoll, we walked on a permissive path sponsored by Defra, which took us through old hay meadows with their wild flowers, to walk beside the River Ray. Several deer were spotted before we returned to the station for an interesting tour of the sheds containing splendid old engines and carriages under restoration. Back aboard the train we steamed back to Blunsdon where a converted Norwegian coach was set with tables at which we sat to enjoy a scrumptious cream tea. The station shop gave us the opportunity to buy various souvenirs of our lovely day in the Cotswold, before our coach transported us back to Purley.

Our next walk took us to three Downland villages, which are all mentioned in the Domesday Book. Beginning in Blewbury, once centre of a large Saxon estate, we walked beside one of the fabulous thatched cob walls, believed to be of Saxon origin. We passed through the churchyard, designated as a *living churchyard*. With its snake's head fritillary, cowslips, primroses and ladies smock, it looked a picture. We passed the pretty Almshouses before heading away from the village on attractive field paths. Spotting the church tower of East Hagbourne, we headed into the village to be greeted by several hens and two cockerels. They looked very happy scratching about in their orchard of frothy white blossom. Along the village street, we admired the beautiful thatched cottages set in lovely gardens.

The church of St Andrew, where we took our break and chatted to local residents, had links with the Priory at Cirencester, which probably is the reason for its large size. The stream running through the village stems from the Shovel Spring, which is said never to dry up. We followed the water, edged with a mass of bright yellow marsh marigolds, until we climbed up to join a dismantled railway. This now forms a cycle track from Didcot to Upton, and we enjoyed the wonderful 360° views to be had from the path.



Sculptured seats made of green oak, and reflecting the surrounding countryside, line the path, and we particularly liked the one representing Wittenham Clumps from where we gained a good view of this Iron Age Hillfort. Reaching our third village, Upton, we enjoyed more lovely cottages and the blossom-filled trees of Upton Fruit Farm. A field path took us back to Blewbury where we walked along one of its many picturesque streamside paths before yet

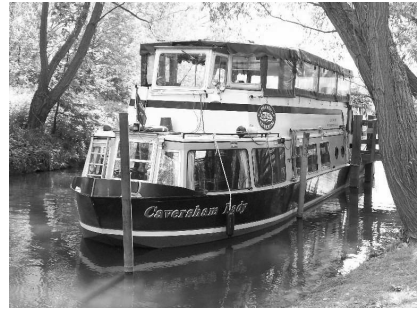
more lovely properties, including Tudor Hall Barn that was a hunting lodge for Henry VIII.

We decided to enjoy the delights of our own village during our next walk so, as the sun shone down, we walked along the bridleway with its good views across the Thames Valley. Joining the Thames Path, we watched the activity on the river as we headed into Pangbourne. The busy village centre was soon left behind as we followed the delightful River Pang as it cut through lush green meadows to lead us into Tidmarsh. Soon we were in the welcome shade of the

wonderful bluebell carpeted Sulham Wood. Back at Purley Village, several walkers enjoyed their picnics in the peaceful garden of Cherry Acre.

Meeting at Crays Pond on a perfect day for walking – warm sunshine with a gentle breeze - we were soon surrounded in lush countryside as our clear route stretched away before us through three fields. The first had fresh lush grass brushing around our ankles. The second was full of maize, which reached our knees. The third was a field of bright yellow rape which reached our heads, and even above some of our members! Quite an experience that left us looking slightly yellow with pollen! Brushing ourselves down we continued along a bridleway edged with bluebells topped with a froth of cow parsley. In Highland Wood we enjoyed the canopy of fresh beech leaves, hiding a woodpecker which could be heard tapping noisily away. We took our break in the middle of a bluebell wood at Tinkers Green. From here a bridleway took us alongside Cross Lanes Fruit Farm where the trees still held on to some of their blossom, before forming fruit for us to buy at the Farmers Market!

May is our birthday month, and this year, to celebrate our ninth birthday, we sat on the comfortable seats of the Caversham Lady as we sailed up the Thames from Caversham, admiring the fine properties and lovely countryside on the way. As we drank our coffee and ate slices of birthday cake, we kept our eyes peeled for wildlife, and besides swans, and ducks with their sweet babies, we were pleased to see a deer, and delighted to spot a kingfisher. We left our boat at Mapledurham and began our walk, which took us through the ancient village with its interesting house names. By the large farmhouse, which we later learned was once the home of the affluent Miller of Mapledurham, we left the village to climb up through Park Wood. We tried to imagine the area when it was landscaped in 1740 by Alexander Pope and William Kent. We stood below a remaining statue, *Old Palm*, to share his view over the treetops to the roofs of Mapledurham House beside the Church. Unfortunately, the bluebells in the wood had gone to seed, but the wild rhododendrons looked stunning.



We passed Mapledurham Golf Course before an easy path dropped us down through Chazey Wood with a good view across the river valley to the Roebuck and to Purley Park. We passed 17<sup>th</sup> century Park Farm and some of its large herd of cows which supply milk to Marks and Spencer. Now we had a good view ahead of us of the imposing frontage of Mapledurham House and we made our way back to picnic in the grounds with a welcome cup of tea and an ice cream! Afterwards we had some time to explore the Country Park. It was interesting to see the weir and the lock from this side of the river. Several families of goslings poised for photographs, but the cygnets, and the coot chicks in their nests would only poke their heads out now and then from beneath their protective mothers. We passed through the Tudor door into the church, noting the display of photographs from when the village was used as location for *The Eagle Has Landed*. Afterwards we met on Mill Island beside the Watermill, with its frontage

easily recognised by fans of Black Sabbath, for it is used on their album cover! We stood in the sunshine while the assistant Miller, Corry, gave us a fascinating insight into the history of the Grade I listed Mill, which is mentioned in the Doomsday Book. Once thatched, it has been extended over the years to accommodate the demand for its flour. During the Plague of London, the Royal Court was relocated to Abingdon. Their desire for white flour made the Miller a very rich man, especially as afterwards, the city mills couldn't cope so flour was loaded from a wharf built at Mapledurham, and sailed down the Thames to London. Corry told us of the long-term plans for the Mill when it is hoped it will generate enough electricity to sell some to the National Grid, ensuring the future of milling at Mapledurham. We were allowed to tour inside the mill, with Corry never far away to answer any of our questions. Next, we made our way to the front of Mapledurham House where we admired a Tulip Tree and a Ginkgo Tree.

Our Guide led us through the front door, framed by fine Magnolia Grandifloras, said to be the earliest specimens in England. As we studied a portrait of the owner, Mr Eyston, he walked through the room, reminding us that this is still, very much, a family home! We were led from one room to another, each containing interesting pieces of furniture and family portraits and photographs. The Oak Tudor Staircase took us upstairs where a pianist serenaded us on the 1926 German piano. In a bedroom, alongside a four-poster bed covered in a lovely old patchwork quilt, stands a mini four-poster in which sleeps a very spoilt doll! One room has a portrait of Martha and Teresa Blount whom Pope had courted, and in another we saw the cushion on which Queen Victoria knelt in 1838 for her Coronation. Back downstairs, we were able to browse through albums, which hold pictures and information of the village's part in various films and TV productions. We had learned plenty of facts to mull over as we made our way to the tearoom where tea and cake was ordered to enjoy out on the lawn leading down to the river.

As we made our way back to the Caversham Lady, clutching bags of Mapledurham flour and other mementoes of the day, we bumped into Mr Eyston who chatted away to us. He told us that several guides are to retire soon so urges anyone who would like to occasionally guide visitors around this fine family home to contact the office. Something to think about during our boat trip back into the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

## **Purley Park Trust**

**How did it start? What does it do?**

To find out, come to  
**Evening Worship at St. Mary's  
at 6pm on 15 June**

instead of the sermon  
Kim Facer will give a talk on the

## **History of Purley Park Trust**

**Followed by tea/coffee and biscuits**

We continue into summer exploring the villages of Whitchurch, Sandford on Thames and South Stoke. We will also be on the lookout for orchids in the Warburg Nature Reserve. How lucky we are, to live surrounded by such wonderful countryside!

*Nicki Woodward*  
*nicki@cherryacre.com*  
*www.purleypathfinders.co.uk*  
*984 2112/07768 986799*



## Celebrate 50 years of the Choir

With a Summer Concert

# Singing Through The Decades

A selection of classic moments  
from the 50s, 60s, 70s & 80s

Fri. 25 & Sat 26 July 2008

The Barn, Goosecroft Lane off Beech Road, Purley on Thames

Performances start at 8pm

Tickets £7 for Adults/£6 for Senior Citizens & Children  
Telephone 986 6947 or 950 4206

## PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

### VACANCY: ASSISTANT CLERK, PURLEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Council is seeking a person to provide part time assistance (approximately two days per week), to our Parish Clerk.

We are seeking an active *hands-on* person to work with the Council and support the work of the Clerk, whose remit covers office management, finance, managing staff and contractors, providing information to residents and the public, and liaising with many local organisations – government, commercial, community safety and voluntary.

Experience of administration and finance, with good computer skills is necessary, as well as good communications and *customer* handling capability. This vacancy will attract someone looking for a part-time position in the vicinity of Purley on Thames, with an interest in local government and involvement in the community.

A more detailed job description can be supplied to interested candidates. Please apply in the first instance, including CV and contact details, to the Clerk at the address below

### COUNCIL VACANCIES

There are vacancies on the Council caused by the resignation of Alex Stott and Sally Robertson. Notices are posted on the village notice boards.

### FARMERS' MARKET DATES

14 June, 12 July, 9 August, 13 September, 11 October, 8 November, 13 December 2008.



## NOTICE BOARD

Chairman: Rick Jones

Vice Chairman: Rick Farrow

Highways & Footpaths: Paul Coombes

Recreation: Graham Rolfe (Vice-Chair – Chairman elected at the first committee)

Barn Management: Roger Woodward

### Dates of Meetings

Parish Council: 19 June, 17 July, 4 September, 9 October, 13 November,  
18 December 2008, 22 January, 26 February, 2 April, 7 May 2009.

Highways & Footpaths Committee: 10 July, 27 November 2008, 12 March 2009.

Recreation Committee: 12 June, 18 September 2008, 8 January, 16 April 2009.

Barn Committee: 26 June, 11 September, 11 December 2008, 26 March 2009.

All meetings are held in the Parish Office and are open to the public. Details of appointments to committees, working groups and outside bodies are posted on the Council website or are available from the Clerk.

See the panel below for changes to Parish Office opening hours.

*Janet Field, Clerk to Purley on Thames Parish Council*

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Our column this month will be short, to allow room for the Purley on Thames Villager of the Year competition form to be published. Please think about who you would like to nominate, and send in the form included here, or on the web site.

By the time you read this, we will have held a Flood Meeting (29 May) in the lower village. Anyone who missed it and would like the information that has been provided to flood wardens and residents, please contact the Clerk at the Parish Office.

I regret to say that Sally Robertson has resigned from her role on the Council, due to conflicting time pressures. Sally has been an excellent Chairman of Recreation, and we will miss her contribution to the Council's work. This of course means that we have another vacancy for a new councillor.

*Rick Jones, Chairman - Purley on Thames Parish Council*

The office, located near the tennis courts, opens:

Mondays (not BH): 2pm to 7.30pm

Including an opportunity to meet Councillors  
between 6.30 & 7.30pm (or by appointment)

Thursdays: 9am to 2pm

Barn Manager: Jean Chudleigh 07917 453187

Allotment Manager: Alex Stott 941 9186

Purley on Thames Parish Council

Parish Office

Goosecroft Lane, off Beech Road

Purley on Thames

Reading

RG8 8DR

Tel/fax: 984 4507

E-mail: clerk@purleyonthames.net

Neighbourhood Wardens: 945 5286

westberks.wardens@sovereign.org.uk www.sovereign.org.uk/wardens

**www.purleyonthames.net**

## Purley on Thames Villager of the Year Award

### **Objective:**

The objective is to reward any parishioner of Purley on Thames for their outstanding services to the village and community of Purley on Thames.

### **Criteria:**

- Must be a resident of Purley on Thames, or have been a resident, or worked for a length of time in the village.
- There must be a clearly identifiable individual contribution over one year or several years, though it may be *delivered* through a local organisation.
- Can be a contribution to the wellbeing of all or a part of the community.
- Committee will judge *perceived value* of contributions from nominees in that year, and make the award to the generally agreed highest *value*.

**Last date for nominations received by the Clerk is Friday 1 August 2008**

I would like to nominate:

Address or contact details (if known):

I feel that he/she should be given the Purley on Thames Villager of the Year Award because:

My Name is:

(It is not essential to provide your own name if you would rather not)

## PROJECT PURLEY

There was a keen air of anticipation among members of Project Purley as Catherine Butcher waited to begin her talk entitled *Daughter of the Regiment* at the Barn on Friday evening, 18 April. We could see that she had prepared a table full of photographs, books, maps, postcards and artefacts with which to illustrate one of the most moving talks ever delivered to the Society. As soon as Catherine began to speak, we knew that we were not going to be disappointed.

She has a clear, pleasant voice and talked to us for an hour without hesitation or interruption. She explained how her father's family came originally from Bannockburn, and after his two brothers had been killed in a mining disaster, he decided to join the army. He enlisted in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, served during World War One, and met Catherine's mother while they were both on duty helping to deal with a fire at Stirling Castle. Catherine Munnoch was born in 1932, and as her father was now a sergeant major in the A. & S., became known as a *daughter of the regiment*. When Catherine was just four years of age, her father's regiment was posted abroad to India, and she at first had to live in a mud hut, where the family had to shake out their shoes each morning to ensure they were not inhabited by scorpions. After re-housing, much of the cooking and cleaning was done by bearers for the soldiers' families. Catherine's family spent three and a half years in India, which she recalled as a very happy period in her life.



However there was a dramatic turn of events in 1939. Catherine passed round a letter dated 7 July 1939 from her father, explaining he and his regiment had been posted to Singapore for jungle warfare training. War had been declared with Germany and the Japanese army was advancing towards Malaya. Australian troops were conscripted to defend Singapore, but on 8 December 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, The Japanese also bombed and decimated Singapore. Catherine, now aged nine, likened the sound of the aircraft engines to that of a swarm of insects. She was woken by her mother and they both took refuge under the billiard table in their house. Her father, by now the Regimental Sergeant Major, was suffering from Malaria and had been sent to the Alexandra Hospital to recuperate. He told his family that the British and Australian troops defending Singapore were in desperate trouble as they had no water, no supplies and were low on ammunition. RSM Munnoch discharged himself from the hospital shortly before Japanese soldiers entered the building and shot or bayoneted all the soldiers receiving treatment there.

With the enemy now just a few hundred yards from their front door, Catherine's mother packed what possessions she could, left home and went with Catherine to the docks to board a ship for Australia. Father went with them, and bought

everyone ice creams (or "Eskimo pies" as he called them) while the bombing of the docks continued. Catherine waved goodbye to her father, who was now due to rejoin his regiment. As the ship left harbour, she saw him become just a speck in the distance. She did not know that she would not see him again for three and a half long years.

The ship arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia, and the passengers disembarked after they had all been declared sane and healthy by the Captain. Catherine and Mrs Munnoch were welcomed by the Red Cross, then lodged with an Australian family in Perth. Meanwhile, Catherine's mother had received a handwritten card from R.S.M. Munnoch to say that he had been captured and was now a prisoner of war of the Japanese. Mrs Munnoch became understandably restless, moving from house to house and job to job, and then fell ill. But she was determined to get young Catherine safely back to her grandparents in Kent. They were due to sail on one ship, but were delayed because Catherine caught German measles. That ship was torpedoed and sank, so the two caught a train to Sydney, then went by ship to New Zealand, Bermuda and Liverpool arriving in England on V.E. Day. They then travelled to Kent so that Catherine could meet her grandparents for the first time. Not for nothing did she say that she had a guardian angel watching over her throughout the war.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, and that forced the surrender of the Japanese army in the Far East. Catherine's father returned home after release from his POW camp, and when she met him, she realised that he appeared to be half the size of the father she had last seen in 1941. The family, now reunited, had to survive the harsh British winter of 1947, when rationing meant food was short. Although RSM Munnoch never spoke about his experiences as a prisoner, Catherine was able, by speaking to other members of the regiment and reading war diaries, to learn details of his great bravery and leadership during that terrible time.

Her father was captured after the surrender of Singapore and sent to the notorious Changi jail, along with many other of the 130,000 Allied POWs. Prisoners were routinely beaten, starved and made to stand in the stifling heat. He was transported by rail, with 35 men crammed into each steel wagon, to Thailand to build the Burma railway. He was put in camps, firstly at Chunkai then later at Tha Khanun, where each prisoner was allowed just eighteen inches width of living space. There was no sanitation, so disease, especially cholera, was rife with prisoners being fed only on meagre bowls of rice.

As RSM, Catherine's father was responsible for maintaining discipline and morale among the Allied prisoners. This he did to such good effect that he was awarded the MBE for his outstanding leadership while in captivity. Among his other activities, he organised concert parties, arranged for the burial of the dead, and had the ashes of those cremated placed in a cairn under a thirty-foot tall cross he had built in the centre of the camp. He was also forced to supervise the digging of the mass graves which were to be used for the bodies of the prisoners should the Japanese decide, under threat of attack, to carry out a wholesale execution.

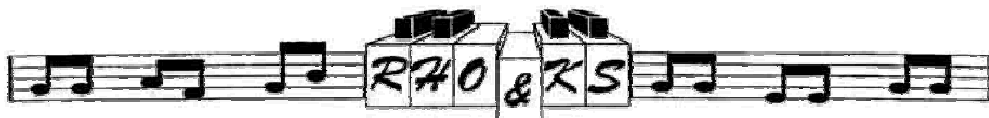
RSM Munnoch and many of his fellow prisoners survived the war and he returned to his regiment. He was introduced to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth when their Majesties visited the regiment, and was a guest at the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip in 1947. His other distinction was to appear as an extra in the film *Bonnie Prince Charlie* before being posted south as an instructor to Bradfield College Combined Cadet Force. Sadly, Catherine's father died aged 58 in 1956, just six months before she was married.

Catherine and her son have visited the site of the camp where her father was incarcerated, and she showed the meeting a rivet and piece of sleeper from the railway on which the prisoners worked. She is a member of COFEPOW (Children of Far East Prisoners of War) which raises money for charity and says she has lost all sense of bitterness towards the Japanese. She has sent much of her father's memorabilia to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders' museum, including photographs she took of the prison camp graves.

Her story was one of great courage in the face of adversity, not just from her father's experience in the prison camp, but also from her own point of view. She says she has had to move on, and her dislike and fear of the Japanese has been washed away over the years. This was brought home to her when she met a young Japanese girl sitting on her own near Tilehurst Station, waiting for her father. Catherine asked if she could sit next to, and protect her, until her father arrived. This had been indeed one of most poignant talks ever given to Project Purley.

*David Downs*

Members of Project Purley visited Mapledurham House and Mill on 16 May and there is a planned trip to Stratfield Saye in July. The annual barbeque will take place on 18 July and the next meeting in the Barn is on 19 September when Richard Benyon will give a talk entitled Big Battlefield Bike Ride.



## **READING HOME ORGAN & KEYBOARD SOCIETY**

Our next concert is on Tuesday 10 June 2008  
at Tidmarsh Village Hall, Pangbourne Road, Reading RG8 8ES, at 8pm.

Our guest artist is Brett Wales, a very well known popular organist on the circuit.  
An excellent evening's entertainment of light music for everyone's taste!

Tickets are £6.50 or £4.25 for members including refreshments.  
Further information can be obtained from Secretary Molly West on 942 7062.