

ST. MARY'S CHURCH - PURLEY ON THAMES

**

SUNDAY SERVICES

9.30 a.m. First Worship - An informal service including All Age Teaching (creche provided)

11.15 a.m. Parish Communion

6.30 p.m. Evening Worship

RECTOR Rev. Roger B. Howell,
The Rectory,
1 Westridge Avenue,
Purley on Thames
Tel: Reading 417727

CURATE Rev. Brendan Bailey,
10 Knowsley Road,
Tilehurst
Tel: Reading 451411

READERS Jean Rothery, Wally Watkivs,
'Oaklea', 15 Fullbrook Crescent,
Tidmarsh Tilehurst
Tel: Pangbourne 843625 Tel: Reading 426170

CHURCHWARDENS Mary Barrett, Andrew Mackie,
46 Beech Road, 52 Primrose Close,
Purley on Thames Purley on Thames
Tel: Pangbourne 842166 Tel: Reading 411786

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Jackie Benstead,
18 Primrose Close,

CHURCH HIRINGS

Liane Southam,
27 Waterside Drive,

Purley on Thames
Tel: Reading 429116

Purley on Thames
Tel: Reading 428243

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

MAY 1995

Dear Friends,

On May 8th it will be the 50th anniversary of VE Day. Many of you will be able to remember that day 50 years ago with a mixture of emotions.

On Sunday May 7th there will be a service of thanksgiving and commemoration at 3 p.m. in St. Mary's Church. All are welcome to come and I hope we shall see many people present.

Many of us have no personal memories of World War 2 - we were either born during it or in the years that followed, but this parish, like almost every other one in the land, suffered during the war years. Five men from Purley were killed and that brought grief to their families and to the community as a whole. Some of you will have very vivid wartime memories - either here or elsewhere. What were **you** doing on VE Day in 1945?

There are some horrific statistics from those dark days:

More than 40 million people were killed between 1939 and 1945.

British deaths were 360,000 (In World War 1 it was 620,000!)

67,000 civilians were killed in air raids.

More than 30,000 merchant seamen lost their lives.

More than 13,500 British-registered merchant ships were lost.
222,000 houses were destroyed by bombs.
3,500,000 homes were damaged.

Life was very different then. Between October 1938 and July 1945, weekly earnings rose from £2 13s 3d (£2.66) to £4 16s 1d (£4.40).

What will be the purpose of the service on May 7th? It will not be a celebration. When the war ended in Europe, there was certainly much celebration, and rightly so. People were so relieved that the conflict was over. But on this 50th anniversary, we shall be remembering what happened - glad that we have not had a major war since then, (although there have been numerous smaller wars), and reflecting with sorrow on the cost of war - on all sides. We shall give thanks to God for deliverance from evil, pray for those who still suffer as a result of war and for the search for peace today.

Sunday, May 7th at 3.00 p.m.

Later in the month there is another important event - Christian Aid Week May 14 -20. There are almost 2,500 homes in the parish and, in recent years, only a small proportion have been visited for the annual house-to-house collection. Do you care about the plight of the hungry and homeless in the world today? If you do, could you put your concern into action and offer your help with this collection? If you can help, please contact Pam Slingsby on 412563.

PARISH REGISTERS

Wedding

8th April

Martin Dobbs and Jill Kennard

Funerals

20th March

Hilda Kathleen Abery, aged 73 years (cremation)

30th March

Betty Evelyn Bushell, aged 72 years

5th April

Sylvia Elizabeth Christine Quinn, aged 66 years

6th April

Delice Wansbrough, aged 60 years (ashes)

BARGAIN CORNER

Six-drawer dressing table with full width mirror. Excellent condition -
6' teak sideboard with 2 cupboards and 3 drawers. Excellent condition -

£15.00

£35.00

Ring 429630 any time

SUNDAY, 7th MAY
Service of Commemoration of 50th anniversary of VE Day
3.00 p.m. St. Mary's Church
All are welcome

ASCENSION DAY

Thursday, 25th May. There will be a service of Holy Communion at 8.00 p.m.

MAKE A NOTE OF THESE DATES!

Saturday, 17th June

St. Mary's Summer Fete

Sunday, 16th July

Riverside Songs of Praise at Mapledurham Lock

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 1995

The house-to-house collection this year will take place between May 14 and 20. In previous years we have not been able to cover anything like the whole parish because of the lack of collectors. We would like to do better this year, **but we need more help!**

Could you offer a little time for this please? Contact the organiser, Pam Slingsby, on 412563.

If you receive a Christian Aid envelope at your house, but it is not collected, please bring it to the Rectory and it will be passed on.

Rector

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

23rd - 26th May 1995 - Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey

Open 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. daily. 1995 Theme - Back to the Bible and Prayer

APARTMENT TO LET

Menorca, Calan Porter, Siesta Marl - pretty apartment, sleeps 5, gardens, pools, central location, beautiful safe beach, available to let weekly or fortnightly. For further information, telephone 844564.

2001 - SETTING COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

Friday, 17th March the conversation went something like this "I'm on leave next week". "Oh, going anywhere?" "Yes, to the Oxford Diocesan Conference, you know a church thing". "Where is it?" "At Butlins at Bognor". "Ah, that's different, hope you enjoy it". This last comment was said accompanied by a knowing look. And we hoped that we would as well.

We hadn't been too sure. Wally had thought that it could prove interesting and that, as a Reader, perhaps he should go and I said that I would go with him but I didn't need to join in everything, did I, as Bishop Richard had said that one could just take the opportunity to be at the conference and use the facilities and South Coast World or enjoy the surrounding countryside.

On arrival at Butlins, we were greeted by a banner announcing the Conference attached to the railings and a group of people of mature years, of both sexes, wearing blue baseball caps with 2001, one of whom gave us directions. The booking in left a bit to be desired. We queued for about 30 minutes in three groups, Oxford, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, to collect keys etc. from Butlins and then had to collect more information from the diocese and then find our accommodation. It was, however, an opportunity to chat to our queuing neighbours. Then the activity began. I had volunteered to sing in the choir along with around 130 others, and the first rehearsal was 5 minutes after we found our room, and that was how the rest of my time there went; hurrying from one thing to another. Being in the choir was time consuming but most enjoyable and was appreciated by others of the 1300 delegates attending.

What are my impressions of the four days as a whole? Firstly, people of all ages moving purposefully about, not quite scurrying, clutching an A4 orange covered booklet looking for the next workshop, seminar or worship event they were to attend. These were held in different venues around the site and had inappropriate names but this did add a little to the fun. If you were lost or puzzled, you could always find a "blue hat", i.e. a wearer of a baseball cap to ask and they would know the answer.

We could choose from varied worship, including Taize, All-age Eucharist with Dance and Drama, a "Prayer Concert", Choral Matins, Iona Worship, a Led Meditation with Silence and the Keynote speakers at the daily Plenary sessions were stimulating, ranging from the controversial to one receiving a standing ovation.

Most people seemed pleasantly surprised that they were enjoying themselves so much. There was no need to feel at all threatened and wherever you came from regarding your spiritual life there was something and someone available for you to relate to.

Personally, yes I did get to the swimming pool, twice, and we did see the sea and have some short walks, but actual sitting doing nothing didn't happen. I came back home physically tired but spiritually refreshed and would definitely go again if only to see one bishop give a thumbs up signal to another bishop as the second one was receiving his standing ovation.

It greatly exceeded my expectations, there are other Christians out there with my needs and problems and there are solutions. Yes, I did enjoy my unusual week's leave!Maureen Watkivs

HOLIDAY CLUB AT ST. MARY'S - THE ARC

Following the success of the children's holiday club last year on the theme of Create It!, this year we will be running another club for those youngsters aged 8 - 12 years old during the second week of the summer holiday. The theme for this year is to be based on the story of Noah and the Flood. The activities will be from 9.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. during the week beginning Monday, 31st July to Friday, 4th August. There will also be a presentation of the events of the club during the joint service at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday, 6th July. Further details will be available soon. Helpers will be needed. So, if you can spare any time, please contact Jackie Benstead (Tel. 429116) or Brendan Bailey (Tel. 451411).

PANGBOURNE VALLEY PLAYGROUP

Pangbourne Valley Playgroup are holding a car boot sale in the car park of Pangbourne Primary School, Kennedy Drive, Pangbourne on Sunday, 21st May, starting at 2.00 p.m.

Cars £5.00 per pitch, vans £7.00. Book your pitch now by phoning Sharon Williams on 841052. All proceeds will go to Pangbourne Valley Playgroup.

J. Davidson, Chairman (843196)

CARAVAN TO LET IN WEST SUSSEX

Sleeps 6, ideally situated for Portsmouth, Chichester, Isle of Wight and Goodwood. Clubhouse on site, 40 yards to sea. Enquiries to 844564

SHUT YOUR SHEDS!!

Now that the good weather has returned, many of you turn your thoughts to the garden. Out comes the lawnmower, spade, fork etc. And, in some cases, out these items stay, providing the thief with easy pickings. More ominously, they do make use of garden tools to force an entry to your home and remove your possessions, with all the subsequent distress involved.

Let's not make life easier for the thief. Ensure your lawnmowers and garden tools are put back in your shed or garage after use. Regarding your shed or garage, ensure that these are secure, a good hasp and padlock on the shed door, a simple curtain for any window on the shed prevents a view of your possessions. Garage doors should always be locked when not in use and why not put an additional bolt on the door if possible.

By taking some simple precautions such as the above, it makes life that little bit more difficult for the thief. Enjoy your gardening!

Rachael Mylum
Area Beat Officer, Thames Valley Police
with assistance from Special Constable Stuart Armstrong

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

There were only 11 nominations for the 13 seats on the Parish Council, so they were all declared duly elected. The 2 remaining places can be filled by co-option so, if anyone is interested, please contact me for further information.

The new Council is:- Bill Ayling (Church Mews), John Chapman (Cecil Aldin Drive), John Colton (Bowling Green Lane), Rita Denman (Purley Village), Peter Farrow (Apple Close), Margaret French (Beech Road), James Heslop (Purley Lane), Reg Marshall (Long Lane), Denise Rees (Addiscombe Chase), John Southall (Nursery Gardens), Prue Taylor (Long Lane).

Reg Marshall
Chairman, Purley on Thames Parish Council

COTTAGE TO LET

Country cottage Brittany/Normandy borders, self-catering, sleeps 5/7. Half-hour from Mont St. Michel, half-hour from St. Malo, one and a half hour's drive from Cherbourg. Few bookings left. Enquiries to: Della Davies, 427919

RINGING IN THE EARS!

We told you in a previous edition of this magazine that the PCC had decided to go ahead with a full scale test ring of the church bells. In order to do this, some preparatory work was necessary. So, on the 1st April (!), a team of willing volunteers scaled the dizzy heights of the tower and cleared out much of the accumulated debris of the centuries from around the bell frame. This was a dusty task but we achieved much more than expected. By the end of the morning, having cleaned out and lubricated the bearings, several of the bells were swung full circle to check the strength of the frame. The bell clappers were tied up so as not to disturb the neighbours with the sudden noise. It appears that there is no major problem with the tower itself, although some repairs will be needed. There was some movement in the bell frame itself. If the bells are to be rung on a regular basis, then the frame would need to be replaced probably with a metal one which would be much stronger. Other work would also be needed on the various parts of the ringing mechanism. However, we will not be able to know the extent of the work needed or the cost involved until the bell hangers report back to the PCC.

We will publish another bulletin when the information is to hand. It would be wonderful if we could get the bells to chime for the VE Day service on May 7th at 3.00 p.m. If you would like any more details of the bells, please get in touch with Rev. Brendan Bailey (tel. 451411), or Len Palfrey who is Tower Captain at St. James the Less, Pangbourne (tel. 842698).

AN INVITATION

As part of its recruitment drive, the Thames Vale Singers invite you to a Welcome Night on Tuesday, 16th May at Purley Memorial Hall, 7.45 for 8.00 p.m. This will be a relaxed evening where anyone who may be interested in becoming a member can meet the choir and sample some easy choral singing.

Those who may be shy or nervous should note that there will be no auditions, nor danger of anything remotely embarrassing. Whether or not you have had previous singing experience, we just want you to come along, be at ease and enjoy yourself.

If you want a very satisfying social activity that's also a great antidote to stress, this is it! See you there.

DON'T FORGET THE VE DAY CELEBRATIONS at Purley Sports and Social Club, Monday, 8th May - 12 noon until late - 1940's theme

PURLEY ALLOTMENTS

There has been a remarkable response to my earlier comment that there were still a few allotments for rent and we are now down to only two half plots. This is, I believe, the highest take-up ever. The two half plots left are 1 Upper and 10 Lower, and rent for £4.00 p.a. A half plot is 30 feet by 45 feet and will provide an ample supply of vegetables.

Once these are gone, we will have to start a formal waiting list which will be in two parts, the first part is for residents of the Parish and the second part for outsiders. Preference is given to parishioners when there is a waiting list.

Note that there is no communal rubbish area and you either have to burn it, compost it or take it home to dispose of. Stones can be put on the central track to fill in the ruts.

John Chapman
Allotment Manager for Purley on Thames Parish Council

PROJECT PURLEY

The next Society meeting will be held on May 19th at 8.00 p.m. at The Gatehouse, Purley Lane. Mr. Clive Williams will be giving a talk about our neighbouring village of Basildon. The talk will be illustrated by Mr. Williams' portable exhibition. All are welcome to what promises to be a very full programme.

Following the Annual General Meeting in March, we were delighted to welcome Joyce Voysey, who told us about the background to gathering the information and memorabilia for the exhibition staged by The Ancient Parish of Whitechurch History Society. The members became very involved with the subject of Whitechurch at War which brought back many memories of the war in other places and situations.

Rita Denman, Hon.Sec.

GIANT PLANT SALE

There will be a giant plant sale at the Purley Park Trust, Hazel Road on **Saturday, 27th May, 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.** Bedding plants, trailing plants, shrubs, dried flowers,

hanging baskets will all be on offer. Have a ploughman's lunch on the lawn for £1.25. Tea and coffee also available. Everyone is welcome. Please support us.

DISTRICT NOTES

As you know, there was a District Council election on May 4th. It appears that this was for a one year term only, as next May there will be elections for the new Newbury Unitary Authority which will take over District functions immediately and County functions a year later. However, until the Order is put through Parliament, we will not know for sure.

The Ridgeway Explorer bus service recommences on May 7th. This year British Rail have joined in the scheme and you can get discounts on bus journeys if you produce a rail ticket at Reading or Goring. There are four buses each way every Sunday between Reading and Swindon and the service will run until late September. The Purley stop is at Purley Post Office.

The 105 bus service has now been split, with Reading Buses operating between Reading and Wallingford, and Oxford Buses taking the Wallingford to Oxford sector, so we will no longer be seeing Oxford buses through the village. The new timetable, combining 100, 105 and 110, for weekdays is:-

Purley Post Office to Reading at 0713, 0735, 0912, 0922, 0950 (not Weds), 1032, 1111, 1137, 1237, 1300 (1310 on Thurs), 1342, 1442, 1536, 1547, 1647, 1713, 1747, 1856, 1946.

Reading Station to Purley Post Office at 0641, 0730, 0755, 0805, 0905, 1005, 1020, 1105, 1140 (not Weds), 1215, 1315, 1335, 1415, 1515, 1600, 1620, 1720, 1745, 1820.

Purley Post Office to Pangbourne at 0700 (P), 0747 (N), 0813 (W), 0830 (N), 0925 (W), 1025 (W), 1045 (N), 1125 (W), 1205 (N)(not Weds), 1235 (W), 1335 (W), 1400 (N), 1435 (W), 1535 (W), 1625 (N), 1640 (W), 1740 (W), 1807 (N), 1840 (W)

(N = 100/110 to Newbury, W = 105 to Wallingford, P = 105 to Pangbourne).

Newbury District Council have taken over the maintenance of sewers in the Reading Borough area and we now have one combined labour force looking after sewers in both Newbury and Reading.

John Chapman

Owing to lack of space this month, the continuing story of the London to Saigon Motor Challenge takes a short break - further episodes in future issues. Editor

THE THAMES VALE SINGERS

The Thames Vale Singers present a musical evening, which includes a selection of wartime songs, with soloists Margaret Shacklady and Reg Blagrove, at Purley Memorial Hall on **Saturday, 13th May at 8.00 p.m.** Tickets are £3.50, and £2.50 for under 16 year olds.

Janet Reed
842044

TRY SAILING

Why? because it's fun at Goring Thames Sailing Club. Come and join us at our Open Day.

When? Saturday, 20th May, from 10.00 a.m.

Where? Goring Thames Sailing Club next to the Leatherne Bottel, The Bridleway, Goring-on-Thames (off the B4009), tel. 01491 873681.

What's Happening? Sailing Demos., videos, the chance to sail for all abilities and ages, and more; plus barbecue, all-day bar, cream teas and ice creams.

SEE YOU THERE.

SHORT BREAK IN CORNWALL

Why not have a relaxing break in a comfortable, detached, character cottage on the edge of a quiet village not far from Bude.

Ideal for a couple wishing to explore the Devon/Cornwall area. There are lots of beautiful coastal walks and easy access to Bodmin and Dartmoor, the cottage being approximately 5 miles inland.

The cottage has off-road parking and secluded gardens. It sleeps 2.

4 Nights from just £85.00 in May and £90.00 in June. Linen/towels and a "Welcome Pack" are included. Sorry, no smokers or pets.

For more information, please telephone 421716.

PURLEY MEMORIAL HALL ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMING MONTH

6th May	10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.	Hemlines Sale
10th May	7.30 p.m.	Women's Institute
13th May	10.00 a.m. - Noon	Plant Sale in Car Park, with W.I. cake stall
13th May	8.00 p.m.	"A Musical Evening with Friends" - Thames Vale Singers
18th May	2.15 - 4.00 p.m.	Health Visitor Clinic
1st June	2.15 - 4.00 p.m.	Health Visitor Clinic

Also:

Thursdays	7.30 - 9.30 p.m.	Upholstery Classes - Re-upholstery: traditional or modern, recovering and repairs, headboards and covered boxes. Ring 843740 for further information.
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Each week during term time, Monday to Thursday, 9.15 - 11.45 a.m. : Purley Pre-School Playgroup. For further details, please telephone Sue Slade on 410778 or call in during one of the sessions.

Mrs. J.E. Hutchings,
Hon.Sec. (843809)

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Spring Flower Show back in April was beautiful. No other word for it. Entries were well up on last year and that made for a lovely display. Congratulations to all who took part. This year's cup winners were:

Springs Farm Perpetual Cup	-	Mr. J. Murphy
(awarded for most points in Flowers & Floral Arts Section)		
Springs Farm Perpetual Cup	-	Mr. G. Critchell

(awarded for most points in Cookery & Handicrafts Section)

The annual coach excursion this year is to Kew Gardens. The cost is £8.50 for the coach and garden entrance. Application forms may be obtained from the Trading Store or John Murphy (tel. 419185) and should be returned with payment **by Sunday, 12th June**. If you have any queries about the Society, please contact me on 420057.

Anne Stockley, Secretary

PANGBOURNE COLLEGE CHORAL SOCIETY

On **Sunday, 21st May at 7.30 p.m.** in Drake Hall, the Pangbourne College Choral Society will be performing the "Nelson" Mass by Haydn. This work, officially known as the "Imperial Mass", is arguably Haydn's greatest composition. It is thought that it is of this work that Beethoven was thinking when he wrote to Prince Esterhazy that he appreciated the commission for a Mass for Eisenstadt, but felt inhibited by the shadow of the great Haydn Masses before him.

The concert also includes a number of works by Purcell, in honour of the tercentenary of his death. These include "Rejoice in the Lord", "Dido's Lament" and "With Drooping Days" from "Dido and Aeneas", Trumpet Sonata, "Remember Not O Lord Our Offences", "Thou Knowest, Lord", and a selection from "Come Ye Sons of Art". Tickets for the concert cost £6, (£4 concessions), and can be obtained from the Box Office, Choral Society, Pangbourne College (tel. 843928), or from Percy Stone Ltd in the village, or from members.

Pauline Garrett
Acting Publicity Officer

THE ARTHRITIS & RHEUMATISM COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH

The House-to-House and Street collections in Purley and Long Lane areas raised £648.35 this year. The total for Pangbourne and District (including Purley) was £1,725.25. Thank you to all who collected and gave so generously.

For every £1.00 donated, 89p goes directly into research, 8p to health education and 3p

for administration.

Dates for your diaries: **Sunday, 28th May** - Little Bowden House, Yattendon Road, Pangbourne - gardens open to the public. Home-made teas will be served from 2.30 p.m. - proceeds to Arthritis Research.

Tuesday, 20th June - Coffee morning at the home of Joan Woods, 24 Grahame Avenue, Pangbourne, 10.30 - noon. Home-made cakes and bric-a-brac gratefully received.

Anne Bolam, 421020

LONG LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our spring term ended with an Easter Service. The children and staff were joined by about 80 of our parents, grandparents and governors. Children read extracts that traced the events of that first Easter. The readings were complemented by songs by the school choir. I believe that it is important to celebrate the major Christian festivals of the year and this we do through specific services and also through the daily assemblies.

Like many schools across this nation, we shall be spending time in talking to the children about VE Day and its significance to this country. Throughout this year I have been telling children about the various anniversaries that are linked to the Second World War and these have included D Day and the life of Anne Frank, whose diary a number of our older children have now read.

We shall be holding a special concert on Friday, 5th May where we hope to raise funds for "Feed the Children" who, together with the local press, have sponsored a "Songs of Hope" appeal which recognises the sacrifices made during the last war but also recognises the need for peace in Europe and the effects of war on children. "Feed the Children" will use the monies raised to help relieve the suffering of children caught up in conflict in parts of Europe and beyond. I have again been impressed by the response of our children who are eager to support our concert by playing and singing as well as pledging to support our bring and buy and cake sale. If you would like to attend the concert, which will be held during the afternoon of Friday, 5th May, please contact me.

Despite all the good work going on at school, governors and I are extremely concerned about this year's budget settlement. Thankfully we shall not be as hard hit as some schools I am sure we have all read about, but there will be reductions in ancillary classroom support and the amount we can spend on resources.

The fact that SO many governing bodies have protested so eloquently, demonstrates just

how serious the situation is this year and I can only hope that the decision makers will realise that children do not get a second chance and that life is not a rehearsal!

A.T. Kuhles
Headteacher

PURLEY CRICKET CLUB

Fixtures:

Saturday 6th May	v Farley Hill (1st XI League)	Away 2.00 p.m.	
"	6th May v Sonning (2nd XI League)	Home 2.00 p.m.	
Sunday p.m.	7th May v Aldworth (Friendly)	Away	2.30
Saturday 13th May	v Holyport (1st XI League)	Away 2.00 p.m.	
" p.m.	13th May v Binfield (2nd XI League)	Home	2.00
Sunday p.m.	14th May v Theale (Friendly)	Home	2.30
Saturday 20th May	v Pinkneys Green (1st XI League)	Home 2.00 p.m.	
"	20th May v Pinkneys Green (2nd XI League)	Away 2.00 p.m.	
Sunday p.m.	21st May v Wallingford Arms (Friendly)	Home	2.30
Saturday 27th May	v Peppard (1st XI League)	Away 2.00 p.m.	
" p.m.	27th May v Peppard (2nd XI League)	Home	2.00
Sunday p.m.	28th May v Sandhurst (Friendly)	Home	2.30

Saturday p.m.	3rd June v Braywood (1st XI League)	Home	2.00
"	3rd June v Frimley (2nd XI League)	Away	2.00 p.m.
Sunday p.m.	4th June v Mortimer (Friendly)	Away	2.30

Practice takes place on Thursday evenings from 6.30 p.m. at our home ground (The Recreation Ground, Beech Road).

If you are interested in participating in the Cricket Club in any way (playing, umpiring, scoring or watching), either come along to any advertised event or contact:

Paul Neal on 417957
or Martin Bishop on 427142

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On the 12th April, Mr. Richard Snailham came to talk about hidden places of Brittany. We were very interested to see his slides and were amused to learn the local sign posts given the distance in time rather than kilometres. We wondered if everyone in Brittany walks at the same speed!

Members had taken part in the Spring Show at the Memorial Hall on the 8th April. As usual, there had been a lot of success with flower arranging, but there were red faces all round when Mr. Critchell again won the W.I. Cup for the most points in the home baking and craft sections. We think we shall have to make him an honorary member. The Horticultural Society have kindly agreed to allow the W.I. to have a cake stall at their forthcoming plant sale on the 13th May. We hope this will enable us to raise some badly needed funds for the Institute.

The competition was to find an interesting buckle or button and this was won by Ella Petrie with Angela Edwards coming second. Vi Watts produced the Flower of the Month and Carol Macgill was runner-up.

Our next meeting on May 10th is our Resolutions Meeting when we will discuss the resolutions to be debated at the National Federation Intermediate General Meeting to be held in Blackpool in June. After the serious business has been completed, we plan to

have some lighthearted participation games.

Ann Betts

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

High Speed Death

A quarter of a century ago, there was concern about excessive traffic speed on the A329 threatening pedestrians and schoolchildren. As a Parish Councillor, I had frequent discussions with County Highways, mainly about a pedestrian crossing, causing them on the last phone call to ask if I would accept a traffic light installation at the Long Lane junction with pedestrian control. That installation has been very effective and I admit to taking a walk round and pressing the pedestrian button to halt traffic completely all ways.

Motor manufacturers for cars and motor cycles have progressively defeated safety by acceleration capacity so that neither the traffic lights, the new roundabout and driving tests have reduced the excessive speed.

So far, since 1934 I have been fortunate, both as a pedestrian and driver. I did pass an advanced driver test in 1968 although I have to admit that in my earlier sports car days it was often the good driving of others that saved my bacon.

Present thoughts are to acquire a black and white chequered flag to wave in front of high speed drivers, indicating that they can slow down, having won the race. Having sown this idea with my son, who looks after the electronics of three hospitals but also has wide youth associations, mainly from the "Rising Sun", it is possible there may be an emergence of chequered flags in the southern region. Judgement of speed is an acquired ability; mine was from 1939 on anti-aircraft when planes were sent over at differing heights and speeds.

Ken Mercer

PANGBOURNE AND DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Who started it?

What does it do?

How does it work?

Who pays for it?
Can it keep going?

These are the sort of questions people ask from time to time and the Editor has kindly offered us space to give some answers.

The Centre was started in 1977 by a small group of people to meet a need for help in the community, particularly for the elderly and infirm in getting to hospitals and surgeries. The group included local clergy, representatives from Pangbourne College, local councillors Mrs. Molly Evans, Pangbourne and John Chapman, Purley (both of whom still serve on the Management Committee) with Mrs. Margaret Radnage and Mrs. Audrey Foulkes as organisers. The area to be served was roughly that covered by the local medical practice. The elders of the United Reformed Church made it all possible by offering the Old Vestry as an office.

The first request, even before the office officially opened, was for gardening help which Pangbourne College was then able to offer but unfortunately no longer can. The office opened for business on 30th May 1977 for three days a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Requests soon began to build up, mostly for transport and visiting, but the early records show some variety. "Young Spanish lady wants help with her English". "Volunteer needed to do up lady's bra each morning" (difficulty overcome by volunteer sewing large hooks so lady could do it herself). By September 1977 there were nearly 60 volunteers, half of them drivers, the rest being office helpers. Nowadays we usually have about 100 volunteers on our list but by no means all active and many can help only occasionally. Our main function is transport. We really can't provide help with gardening as most of our volunteers are of an age when that is the help they themselves need, but we do manage to assist a few people with shopping. For two weeks in July each year we deal with the distribution of travel tokens on behalf of Newbury District Council.

The Centre is open from 0930 to 1130 Monday to Friday. It is no good ringing at other times. When you want help with transport, please don't ring up the Centre and say "Can I order a car to go to" It really hurts our feelings to be spoken to as if we were a taxi service!

We don't have volunteers standing by and when a request for help is received we have to ring around to find someone able to help. On occasions that can take a lot of phone calls before we find someone at home and able to take on that particular job. The record number of such calls is 22 but fortunately we don't often need so many. Give us about a week's notice if you possibly can, or at least three or four days. Only in real emergency

ask us to do something "today". Always make your request to the office, not to the volunteer who may have taken you last time.

It costs over £4,000 a year to run the Centre and payment to volunteer drivers accounts for over half of that. Motoring costs are very high these days and one can't expect drivers to do journeys for nothing although, in fact, some don't make a claim. Administrative expenses such as telephone, insurance, heat and light, printing and stationery, and Organisers' expenses account for the rest of the £4,000 or so total. We are extremely grateful to the United Reformed Church for allowing us rent free use of the Old Vestry. Without their generosity we could not expect to make ends meet and there would probably no longer be a Volunteer Centre in Pangbourne.

Who provides all that £4,000 or so? Some will be surprised to know that we have to look to you, the people we help, for most of it. Less than £1,000 is covered by grants from county and parish councils and that is more than swallowed up by administrative expenses. We raise some funds from social activities, coffee mornings etc. but it is what you give us as payment for your journey which enables us to carry on. From the start, it has been our policy, unlike other Centres, not to make a fixed charge but to rely on donations. We hope that those who can afford to do so will contribute approximately the 30p a mile it costs us and that those less well off will give as much as they can. As an example, the 16 mile return journey from Pangbourne to Royal Berks Hospital costs us nearly £5 - more from Upper Basildon and further afield. The driver will give you an envelope in which to put your donation in either cash or travel tokens.

If the Centre were ever to fade, it would be through lack of the essential resource, *people*, not funds. There is a constant need for new volunteers to replace those who move away or have to give up for other reasons. Unfortunately few new people, particularly drivers, are coming forward. Being a volunteer driver simply means being willing to be asked and being able to say "no" if the job is inconvenient or just unwelcome. There is no commitment. Have you some time to spare? Come in and have a chat with one of the Organisers, Derek Dutson or Chris Wilcox. If your talents run more to organising than just taking part as a volunteer, they would be particularly glad to talk to you because, after running the Centre for some 12 or 13 years, they are urgently looking for successors.

Chris Wilcox

FROM MY HISTORY NOTEBOOK

The Census Return 1851

This month (April 1981) the Census will be taken as it has been every ten years since 1801 - except in 1941 when the war put a stop to things. The earlier Censuses were only "head counts" but in 1851 all the inhabitants are listed by name and ages, jobs and birthplaces are detailed - and it is this return that I have been looking at. (Reading Reference Library has microfilms of the Returns for Berkshire of 1851, 1861 and 1871).

Purley's population in 1851 was 220; 123 males and 97 females. Their average age was 27 years, and over half had been born in Purley or within five miles of the parish. It is not possible to identify the cottages in the village as we know them today; only the Rectory, Purley Hall, Purley Park and Mapledurham Pound are named - everyone lived in "Purley Village" or "Oxford Road". (But which was the "Old House" in Purley Village? Was it Ivy Cottage?)

Everyone who was in the village on the night of 30th March is recorded. The 55-year old bachelor Rector, Richard Palmer, was at home in the Rectory with his housekeeper, maid and groom. William Sheppard, the keeper at Mapledurham Pound (the Lock) was with his wife, Mary Ann, and three of their children. Mary Ann was born in Northamptonshire and probably came to Purley from a working boat on the Thames. Her husband was born in Streatley.

The grocer was William Pocock in the Oxford Road. It must have been difficult to make ends meet because his wife, Esther aged 44, was a "working mother" - she was an agricultural labourer. Six of their then nine children were living at home - the tenth was yet to be born. John Simmonds, the blacksmith, his wife Susannah, and their 2-year old son and an apprentice lived in the Oxford Road. "Superdad" Jesse Lewendon, a gardener aged 30, was in Purley Village with his first wife and their eldest 5 children aged between 12 months and 8 years. (He went on to have 16 children by two wives!)

Most of the villagers worked on the land as labourers, from 10-year old Frederick Green to 92-year old Thomas Martimane, (the oldest inhabitant). They were probably all employed by Edward Sherwood, who farmed 800 acres and employed 45 labourers. He leased all of Purley's land and most of the cottages. None of the labourers could afford servants.

But the tenants of Purley Park and Purley Hall were wealthy. There were 12 servants at Purley Park to look after a household of five; and 8 servants at Purley Hall to look after only four.

Thirty children were scholars and were aged between 3 and 10 years old. They would have attended the village school where Mrs. Mary Herridge was the Mistress - although

in 1851 she said she was an "agricultural labourer", the Berkshire Directory says differently. Four OAPs were "in receipt of Parish relief" - they were the widows, Martha Hope who was 67, and Mary House, 84. Both lived with their sons and had been agricultural labourers. Sarah Hope, aged 66, lived with her unmarried sister of 61 - they had been servants.

The picture emerges of Purley as a small rural community. I wonder how our Census Returns will look in 130 years' time?

Jean Debney

(This article was first published in Purley Parish News in April 1981 and has been reproduced by kind permission of Jean Debney).

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PURLEY PARISH NEWS

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This magazine is published on the first Saturday of each month (except August). Subscription Price £4.00 for the period January 1995 - March 1996 inclusive. If you are new to the area and would like to subscribe to Purley Parish News, please contact the Circulation Manager, Les Jamieson, on Rdg. 412342.

This month's magazine is published on **Saturday, 6th May 1995**. All copy for the June issue must reach me by **15th May** and the magazine will be published on **Saturday, 3rd June 1995**.

Editor

LAUGHLINES

A Minister put up a notice on a field next to the church.

"I will give this land to anyone who is content."

A parishioner came to him and asked for the field.

"Are you content?" asked the Minister.

"Yes", said the man.

"Then why do you want the field?"