

Dear Friends,

Birmingham City Council has suggested that the name "Christmas" should be dropped in favour of a new name for the coming season - *Winterval!* I wonder what you think of this idea? My guess is that it would not receive wide support. The indications are that when the suggestion was made, it was greeted with a range of different feelings - surprise, shock and not a little derision. Political correctness gone mad!

I certainly would not want to drop the name "Christmas", but why do so many people want to keep it when the celebrations of the majority have next to nothing to do with the real meaning of the season? Can you imagine celebrating a birthday with not only no reference to the one whose birthday is being celebrated but a complete ignoring of that person? We would not dream of doing such a thing. But each year that is just what happens when it comes to Christmas!

Now I am not knocking parties and presents and the traditional trimmings, but let's get back to what we are supposed to be remembering and celebrating:

God who made the world and saw it go off the rails, came amongst us in Jesus, not only to show us how to live, but also to make it possible for us to be different.

Most of you who read this will say you believe in God, so what is the problem about

bringing the birth of Jesus into your celebrations? You can, of course, do this quietly at home, but how about joining with others to give thanks for this amazing and wonderful gift?

Sometimes people feel that God is remote, but the message of Christmas is that He entered into the very centre of human life - we might even say the depths, for the stable was not exactly a four star hotel! God came down to the human level in order that we might understand Him and experience Him in our daily lives. That is how interested He is in us.

I hope you have a good time this Christmas - but for the right reason. Without Jesus in Christmas, all too often all there is left at the end of the day is a thick head and a mess on the carpet. But when we celebrate the real thing, Christmas Day may only last for 24 hours, but the wonder of what God does for us lasts for ever -whatever happens.

Happy CHRISTmas!

ST. MARY'S GIFT WEEKEND

We would like to say thank you to all who have given donations towards the cost of our Restoration project. Over this special weekend, the church was open for visitors. The number of people who came was small, but the total given so far is upwards of £10,000! If anyone who missed this event still wants to help us, donations can be given to the Rector or church treasurer, Barry Brown (42 Hazel Road). Cheques should be made payable to "St. Mary's Purley PCC".

Rector

SENIOR CITIZENS' TEA PARTY

Invitations have gone out for the tea party to be held on Sunday, 13th December from 3.00 - 4.30 p.m. at the Church Hall, but if you have not received one, and would like to come, please contact Sheila Adnett (962 5760). If you need transport, we can arrange it.

BRADFIELD DEANERY NEWS

A new Vicar has been appointed for the Parishes of Mortimer, Mortimer West End and Padworth. He is Rev. Paul Chaplin, at present working in Wokingham, and he will begin his ministry with us on Tuesday, 15th December when he will be licensed by the Bishop of Reading at a service in St. John's Church, Mortimer at 8.00 p.m.

SUNDAY SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

6th Dec.	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Morning Worship
	6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
13th Dec.	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
20th Dec.	9.30 a.m.	Family Carols
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Carol Service
24th Dec.	4.30 p.m.	Crib Service
	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Communion
25th Dec.	10.30 a.m.	Family Communion
27th Dec.	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion

PARISH REGISTERS

Baptism

25th Oct. Matthew James Bettaney

Funerals

21st Oct. Annie (Nancy) Doreen Rutter (Ashes), aged 87 years

28th Oct. Iris Stella Steele (Ashes), aged 69 years

3rd Nov. Frances Mary Bathgate (Cremation), aged 76 years

THAMES VALE SINGERS

Thames Vale Singers will be presenting their "Christmas Pot Pourri", a concert of Christmas music and verse, in St. Mary's Church, Purley at 8.00 p.m. on Saturday, 19th December.

Make this your start to the festive season. Admission £4.50, concessions £3.50, accompanied children free. Contact Maureen and Wally Watkivs (942 6170) or any

member of the choir.

About 30 people have attended the *Alpha* Course in Purley since last September. This was part of the Nationwide *Alpha* Initiative in which more than 4,100 churches of all denominations have taken part. We are preparing another course to start early in the New Year, so if you would like to know more, please contact **Sally Robertson on 962 5978**. There are no holds barred on this course. You can ask what you like and we welcome anyone - atheists, agnostics, doubters, would-be Christians or church members.

BARGAIN CORNER

Playmobil Dolls House (5300) 2' wide x 1' deep x 2' high, with 40 pieces of furniture.
£40.

Raleigh "Splash" bicycle, 14" wheel. **£20.**

Tel: 942 7627

*"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace:
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease."*

These are well known words from the last verse of the carol "While shepherds watched"

I hope we can bear these words in mind when we are busy buying all our Christmas cards and presents for family and friends. Once again, I am calling upon your generosity to remember those children in the parts of the world who are suffering from wars and conflicts. In particular I would like you to remember the children of Kosovo. Children's Aid Direct are now able to re-enter certain areas of Kosovo and help re-house and bring families back together after the awful atrocities.

The children yearn for education. I think one of the best gifts we could give them at this time would be simple notebooks, pencils, rulers, etc. Please, please when you are shopping during this season of goodwill, pop an item(s) into your shopping trolley and bring it along, duly wrapped in seasonal paper to St. Mary's Church. There is a red box in the entrance porch ready to be filled. If you are not a member of St. Mary's or unable to attend, please give me a ring on 962 5760 and I will gladly collect your gift from your home. Alternatively, please drop it in to me at 10 Barbara's Meadow, Tilehurst.

With many thanks on behalf of these children.

Sheila Adnett

NANCY AYRES

People will be sad to hear that Nancy Ayres, who had gone to live in Cornwall to be nearer her family, has died. When she lived in Purley, she and her husband Reg were involved in nearly everything, from the Horticultural Society, to the Parish Council and Memorial Hall. Nancy was W.I. Treasurer for about 23 years.

Our condolences go to her family, and we will always be grateful for those who gave such constant service and contribution to the village. Thank you, Nancy.

Sylvia Conquest

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

At the recent meeting of the Parish Council, consideration was given to the co-option of a parish councillor to replace Mrs. Pru Taylor who had resigned. Two applications had been received, from Mrs. Susan Kelly of Beech Road, and Mr. Ralph Miller of Colyton Way and, after a ballot of councillors, Mr. Ralph Miller was duly co-opted to the Parish Council.

On the subject of the new cemetery, further tenders had been received for the work of laying out, etc. and the prices quoted were still beyond the Council's means. Further consideration would be given to the specification of work and also to the manner in which the work would be carried out.

Mr. Chapman reported on West Berkshire's decision to discontinue the Mobile Office and that it was probable that similar facilities would be available at the mobile libraries. It was also hoped that a base for the attendance of a Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths would soon be available in the eastern end of West Berkshire District, possibly in Theale.

The Council noted a report from Mr. Bill Ayling on recent fund raising efforts in respect of the possible improvements to the facilities at Bucknells Meadow. There had been a sponsored walk and other events were planned. The Council was particularly impressed that these efforts were led, in the main, by children living adjacent to the Meadow.

A further approach is to be made to Mapledurham Estate for permission to install a kissing gate at the end of River Gardens to replace the stile.

Further incidents of vandalism in the Parish were reported, e.g. four of the five noticeboards in the Parish had been smashed, damage had been caused in the Pikeshaw amenity area, windows at the rear of the Barn had been smashed. Parishioners are urged to keep a look out for the culprits of these and any other incidents.

Members of the Council had met with representatives of Trenthams Bowls Club to discuss matters relating to the financing of the maintenance of the Club buildings and greens.

There had been a further resignation from the Parish Council in that Mrs. Denise Rees of Addiscombe Chase has resigned due to business commitments. The vacancy will be advertised in the normal way on the parish noticeboards.

R.F. Fullbrook

PANGBOURNE PYRAMID PROJECT

All Churches Together Millennium Project - Pages Gardens, Pangbourne

A very sincere thank you to our House to House collectors who went out, often in very wet and windy weather, during the week 26th October - 1st November. We are most grateful for the interest and support we received from the people of Pangbourne, Whitchurch, Basildon, Purley, Tidmarsh and Sulham. We thank you for your donations, amounting to the splendid total of £2,109.17.

Poppy Dixon

PANGBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

We are currently preparing for our 30th January concert of Bach's St. John's Passion, which will take place at the Drake Hall, Pangbourne College. Tickets will be available from the usual outlets.

John Talbot

PURLEY MEMORIAL HALL ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMING MONTH

6th Dec. 10.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Art Exhibition

9th Dec. 7.30 p.m.

Women's Institute

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas break.

Mrs. J.E. Hutchings
984 3809

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The Millennium is just around the corner; whatever we hope to produce for the occasion must be thought through, so hopefully ideas will be forthcoming.

Mrs. Chris Greaves came last month equipped with a comfortable lounger so she put one of our visitors through her paces, to practise Reflexology. Imagine the foot suctioned into parts of the body, and with firm pummelling of the thumb, stimulated the part of the foot that represents that part of the body, giving relief and comfort. We all practised hand massage and must say never have I known the ladies so quiet for so long!! As alternative medicine, the science is to approach the nervous system in calming and relaxing, touching our tender points with mind and body working together. Wonderful for road rage! The competition, "Christmas Stocking" was won by Sylvia Conquest, who also came first in the Flower Competition with a Rose, Lee Hall being runner-up with a Fuschia. This month we have our Christmas Party so will be participating in festive jollification. Merry Christmas and a Peaceful Year to you all. Sylvia Conquest

THE FAMOUS FIVE ARE IN PURLEY

Probably not the Famous Five whom Enid Blyton wrote about but five very industrious and hard-working children who have the community of Purley on Thames very much in their hearts. The five, Sonney, Halley, Jordan, Holly and Chelsea all thought it would be a good idea if something could be done to make the Bucknell's Meadow "park" into something more likely to resemble a playing area where all children could enjoy themselves in pleasant, clean and tidy surroundings.

They wrote to the Council and Councillors Christine Taylor and Bill Ayling met up with them and other interested parties on the playing field. Everybody put forward their ideas of what they would like to see done - something to make it a much nicer place. Some suggestions just were not practical but, in general, the ideas were thought out and when presented to the Parish Council made sensible and pleasant improvement to Bucknell's Meadow playing fields.

Now the children have collected over £400 through "gunging", a sponsored walk and a very generous gift. Their aim is to present this to the Council for a contribution towards new playing field equipment. Further activities include an under-12 disco and car boot sales.

No, this is not a touch in as far as money is concerned, but the assistance of the Purley on Thames parishioners is urgently needed in terms of helpers. People willing to serve on a committee, people who will help to organise further events - in short, those of the community who have the best interests of the village at heart.

If you can help in any way, please contact myself, Christine Taylor or any Parish Councillor, or write to the Clerk of the Council at the Council Offices, Beech Road. Everybody can be of help in this important project which could well be the Millennium project of Purley on Thames.

Bill Ayling,
11 Church Mews, Purley on Thames

YATTENDON CRAFT GALLERY

(situated on the road between Pangbourne and Hermitage in Yattendon Village)

Please come and browse for Christmas presents. All products made by local craftspeople. Our opening hours are:-

Thursday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Friday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Saturday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm
and Sunday 11.00 am - 3.00 pm. Maureen Roke

Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham

Apple Day celebrations at Cross Lanes Fruit Farm were enjoyed by hundreds on Sunday, 18th October. The weather was wonderful and the profusion of apples truly amazing. Orchard walks, apple tasting and children's games were all popular.

The Franklin's have been planting new trees over the last three years and now grow forty-six different varieties of apple as well as plums and pears.

Cox's Orange Pippins, Russets, Bramleys, other apples and apple juices will be available up to Christmas in the Farm Shop which is open from Wednesday to Sunday 10 am to 6 pm. (Cross the river in Reading, take the A4074 Woodcote and Oxford road, turn left on leaving the built-up area, shop in 1 mile on right). SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GIFT BOXES OF COX'S TO ORDER. Tel: 972 3167.

Gillian Franklin

PURLEY PRE-SCHOOL

We are holding our Christmas Fayre on Saturday, 12th December from 12 noon - 2.30 pm in St. Mary's Church, Purley. This is a joint venture with Purley C.of E.Infant School and one of our major fundraising events. There will be a variety of stalls, games and refreshments, and all are welcome. Admission is 30p adults, children free.

Children and parents joining us in January have been spending a morning at the Pre-School, seeing how we run and meeting staff and other children.

The children are now busy rehearsing our annual Christmas Play. This year the theme is "The Letters of Christmas". All children are allocated a part and will perform to parents on Wednesday, 9th December. Themes for this half-term are: Fireworks, Black and White, Cooking, Numbers, Christmas : Calendars, Cards and Decorations. We end this

term on Thursday, 17th December with a party for all the children, and re-start on Monday, 4th January.

Sue Slade

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

20th December	9.30 a.m.	Family Carols
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Carol Service
24th December	4.30 p.m.	Crib Service
	11.30 p.m.	Midnight
Communion		
25th December	10.30 a.m.	Family Communion
27th December	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion

COME TO CHURCH THIS CHRISTMAS

All are welcome

PURELY-ON-THEMES

But does it not flood in the winter,
This Purley town of yours;
Sitting as it does on the river Thames,
When the autumn floodstream roars?

And does that muddy water lap
At your door, or roll inside?
Retreating later with muddied path,
And carpets ruined by tide.

I gently taught him the lie of the land,
And our height above the sea.
At eighty metres, should Beech Road flood,
Then Reading drowned would be.

And even for those on the river bank,
The winter floods are o'er.
"The river", proclaimed the men of Thames,
"Will trouble you no more".

"But why", he puzzled, "at your great height,
Is 'on Thames' still for you?
So high above the valley floor,
Is there not address more true?"

Well, Purley on Top came to my mind,
Or Purley on the Brim,
Until the thought of brimstone fire,
Expunged that little whim.

And for those along the railway line,
Maybe Purley in Between;

And Purley Beyond along Long Lane;
Does that complete the scene?

The alarm clock woke me, the old man gone,
It was just another dream.
Let's leave it all as Purley on Thames,
Illogical though that may seem. Anno

PURLEY MAGNA

Food and water is man's first need. The history and origins of ways of obtaining food are, therefore, as old as man himself and, in comparison, the history of buildings and towns pale into insignificance. In C 6,500 BC a nomadic life of hunting and gathering persisted in the British Isles. We know from the archaeological finds that our area has been inhabited and used by man since time immemorial. Stone Age man trekked along the Thames Valley when our islands were still attached to Europe, bringing the skill of working in stone.

We can imagine these early settlements set up along the Thames quite likely on rising ground along our own stretch of the river with primitive dwellings made from the abundance of natural materials and the lush growth along the riverside. These early residents would have watched the rain coming across the hill, the swans flying up and down stream, the geese migrating and the ducks clattering in the reeds just as we do. By C 6,500 BC Britain was an island and the process of identity development began. We can, therefore, say that whatever the name or owner of the farms we know today, their forerunners are thousands of years old and the very soil that is farmed and cultivated was once theirs.

In terms of recorded history the first reliable information is the so-called Domesday Book, the Norman census of 1086.

In READING Hundred:

Roger also hold PURLEY, Brictward held it from King Edward. Then it answered for 4.5 hides now for 4 hides. Land for 4 ploughs. In lordship 2; 9 villagers and 3 smallholders with 3 ploughs. Meadow 16 acres. The value was 100s; later £4, now 100s.

This reference relates to the largest of the three manors which formed the parish of Purley. It was known as Purley Magna and roughly corresponds to what is now the built-up area of Purley. It is noted in the Victoria County Histories that "The Northern part of the Parish lies very low and is liable to floods. The soil is loam and gravel and the sub-soil gravel. The chief crops are oats, barley and beans."

The original great house or manor of Purley Magna was near the river on what is now the land occupied by the Purley Marina. It was surrounded by its farm buildings and the Church. Of the earliest manor house we know nothing. The manor was in the hands of the Huscarle family soon after the conquest and in the 14th century passed to the Carew family. It eventually passed into the ownership of Joan Saunders, whose first marriage had been to Sir John St. John of Lydiard Tregoze Co. Wiltshire.

In 1514 Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Blount, became engaged to John St. John, the son of Joan Saunders and Sir John St. John of Lydiard Tregoze (deceased). When they married they came to live at the ancient manor house at Purley which was almost opposite to the equally ancient Mapledurham House. During the coming century both these houses would be rebuilt. The St. Johns were in possession of Purley Magna for the next 300 years.

Throughout the 19th century the manor belonged to the Storer family who had moved the main residence to the large house known as Purley Park, well away from the flooding. The estate was sold in the 1920s and eventually fell into the hands of the developers so that now it is almost all covered in houses. However, some parts remain in agriculture, carrying on a tradition from earliest times.

Rita Denman

NEED A COT FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY?

Have you a baby coming to stay for Christmas and need to borrow a cot?

I am looking after a cot for S.S.A.F.A. (The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) which can be borrowed for a donation to the Charity.

Anne Bolam,
942 1020

Set out below are the recorded Crime Figures for the month of October.

<u>Type of Offence</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>October</u>
Burglary - Dwelling	3	4
Attempted Burglary - Dwelling	0	1
Burglary - Other than in a Dwelling	3	0
Theft (including shoplifting)	3	3
Theft from Motor Vehicle	3	1
Theft or Unauthorised taking of Motor Vehicle	2	4
Theft or Unauthorised taking of Pedal Cycle	4	0
Criminal Damage	5	5
Violent Crime	0	1
Arson	0	0
Indecency (on female)	1	0
Public Order Offences	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>24</u>	<u>19</u>

Well, last month was up, this month is down, which is good news.

Burglaries are again starting to be committed. Christmas is coming and, like the rest of burglars, they're after money for presents. The current trend is for daytime burglaries, whereby entry is via ground floor patio door or window. The method is to have a bladed instrument (possibly a screwdriver or Jemmy) into the frame and pull open. We have had windows broken with a brick or similar, but this method is at present far less common. If the truth be known, most burglars only favour one method of entry, only if it works. If push comes to shove, most can adapt their method of entry to suit different situations.

However, there is still no substitute for good quality locks and, if possible, some sort of alarm system.

Of the four vehicles that were stolen, two were recovered, one being recovered whilst the thief was still in it! This was a vehicle stolen from Tilehurst and the thief arrested in it in Burghfield Common. A person is currently on remand in prison awaiting trial. The other vehicle was recovered on the Overdown Road, Tilehurst and two are still outstanding. All the offences took place overnight.

Yet again, damage was indiscriminate, but several offences were as a result of eggs being thrown at windows at or about Halloween time. Some call it funny!

Generally, crime continues to fall but it is only through hard work and diligence. Do not get complacent and stay alert to the possibility of crime. Prevention is difficult to quantify, but is definitely cheaper than detection.

Although I have relinquished the role as dedicated Area Beat Officer for Purley and Tilehurst, I will continue to keep you updated via my newsletter each month.

So, until next month, all the best.

PC 3236 Welford

GARDENER'S CORNER

As I mentioned a few months ago, I intended to write one of these articles on the gardening content of the Internet. This was originally intended to be produced early in 1999; however, I have decided to bring this article forward as the RHS has just announced that, from next summer, it will be making available its considerable library archive resources, on all manner of gardening topics, on the Internet. This will

considerably increase the research material available to amateur gardeners and also give access to a wealth of good advice and information. The RHS is also launching an Internet bookshop from next month. This will initially feature around 700 titles but will soon be expanded to cover almost 7,000. This, therefore, seems as good a time as any to review this subject in some detail and perhaps engender some interest for this medium. One advantage of the Internet is that it is always being updated and is, therefore, representative of current views and ideas, unlike a book which is only as up to date as the author can make it when it was written.

The current RHS website (www.rhs.org.uk) is already worth a visit as it contains a good deal of gardening information and details of garden events, show reports and results of RHS trials on plants and seeds. You can also E-Mail the society for advice on a range of topics.

Advice and gardening hints are the strong point of a site called Sherry's Greenhouse (www.teleport.com/~earth/). This is basically an interactive site where you can E-Mail questions and you are guaranteed a reply. The more interesting queries and answers are reproduced for everyone to see on the site.

There are some Garden Centres on the line which allow you to browse through their stock of garden products and order on-line via a credit card. Tyler's Garden Centre for example (www.tylers.co.uk) will supply garden tools, fencing, ornaments and stoneware etc. to anywhere in the UK. All this with no delivery charge!

If you're interested in organic gardening then the Ryton Organic Gardens site (<http://www.hdra.org.uk>) is a must for you. This site contains details on all organic gardening topics and is especially good on composting techniques. The site is operated by the Henry Doubleday Research Association. Ryton gardens are situated south of Coventry on the A45 and are easily accessible on a day trip by car from this area. If you do go, make sure you visit the organic restaurant for a real treat!

Looking for that elusive gardening book you always wanted? Then there are many sites offered by booksellers both large and small where you can search for that treasured volume and order on-line. For example, Blackwells (www.blackwells.co.uk) or Amazon Books (www.amazon.com). The latter has over a million titles fully searchable by author or title. Fortunately these are not all gardening books!

The Museum of Garden History also has a website which can be found at www.compulink.co.uk/~museumgh. Their Web pages give you a flavour of what to

expect from a visit, tell you about programmes of activities and lectures, report the work of the Tradescant Trust, and provide links to other Internet sites and sources of interest.

One of the major benefits of the Internet are the Newsgroup. These are solely for you the user and do not contain commercial content like the sites I have mentioned above. Newsgroup provide a forum for like minded people where views and information can be exchanged and you can pose those questions which have bugged you for years. Gardening, like many other hobbies, has a number of such groups dealing with a variety of topics. For instance, there are some general gardening newsgroups (uk.rec.gardening and rec.gardens). However, there are also some more specialised groups such as Roses (rec.gardens.roses), Orchids (rec.gardens.orchids) and Bonsai (rec.arts.bonsai).

Well, you may say, this is all very well but just how good is the content of these sites and is it worth having a PC and signing up to the web for? To try and answer this I have extracted some material from these sites and have reproduced a very small sample below.

These are two pieces of advice on slugs and Christmas Cactus from correspondents to Sherry's Greenhouse site:-

"This has been the year of the slug invasion here. We're talking about thousands, literally. I kill slugs with a spray bottle filled with half and half household ammonia and water. I have been looking for ways for mass killing. I heard about cottage cheese containers and beer and tried some. They work, but with the slug supply we have they are not big enough and fill up overnight and let the ones on top escape. I had a thought it had to be a container with slick surfaces. The only large container that matched that description that I could think of around here was an old metal bedpan. I tried it and it works. The sight of a bedpan filled with dead slugs is a real stomach turner; it looks as if the patient was really sick, but maybe the concerted efforts will turn the tide."

"Starting Christmas Cactus is easy. Just cut off a piece about 3 inches long. Leave that piece out for a few days or more until the cut end has dried and "healed". Then plant (cut end down) in well-draining potting mix and water it in. To increase the humidity around the cutting, cover loosely with a plastic bag. (The bag should NOT touch the cutting). Then wait. It won't be long before you see new growth on the cutting. Note: I have actually left such cuttings unplanted in a plastic bag for MONTHS before finally getting them into soil. They still grew well."

In such a short article I can only touch on the wealth of gardening information available to you on the Internet. I hope I have stimulated your interest. If anyone wishes to correspond on this subject, then I will be happy to give further details. I am currently

compiling my own website which will feature more gardening information and a copy of all of my previous articles. You can contact me at my new E-mail address: colin@graves2.freemove.co.uk or at 2 The Hydes, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6GD.

Happy Gardening and a Merry Christmas,
Colin Graves

PURLEY RISE POST OFFICE AND STORES

Christmas and New Year information:

Latest recommended airmail posting dates

Outside Europe	-	Saturday, 5th December
Europe	-	Saturday, 12th December

Latest recommended inland posting dates

Second class	-	Friday, 18th December
First class	-	Tuesday, 22nd December

Post Office Opening Hours

Open as usual except Friday, 25th December (closed); Saturday, 26th December (closed); Monday, 28th December (closed); Friday, 1st January (closed).

Pension and Allowances Advance Payments

Payment due on:	Payment may be collected on or after:
Thursday, 24th December	Thursday, 17th December
Friday, 25th December	Friday, 18th December
Monday, 28th December	Monday, 21st December
Friday, 1st January	Tuesday, 29th December

Post Office collection times are 9.00 am, 11.45 am, 5.15 pm and 6.30 pm from the letter box. If the letter box is full at any time, then please bring your mail into the Post Office or, if we are closed, put through the shop letter box and we will send them via the next collection.

Don't forget that the shop side of the business is open when the Post Office is not

(through the lunch hour 1.00 - 2.00 pm and Thursday afternoon half-day closing and also an extra hour in the evening until 6.30 pm). Books of stamps are available at the shop counter. Next time you come in why not buy a book of stamps so that you always have some in hand?

A lot of customers do not realise that a Sub-Post Office salary is based on units that are added up each month. Therefore, every single transaction is very important to us and much appreciated. For small businesses we now have in stock rolls of 200 1st or 2nd class self-adhesive stamps. The plus factor of buying books or rolls of stamps is the fact that they have no price on them and, if there is an increase, you can carry on using them without paying any extra.

If you have any urgent or valuable mail, we have a special delivery service which offers next day delivery before 12 noon. Prices start at £3.20 with £250 compensation included. Higher levels are available, but we must receive your items before 5 pm.

This year has seen a marked increase in customers using payment cards to help budget their bills. The most popular used in this area at the moment are British Gas, Thames Water and TV Licensing. If you would like to pay your bills weekly or monthly this way, then just contact the appropriate company and they will send you a card letting you know how much you need to pay. There are no extra charges incurred for paying bills by this method. Alternatively, if you usually pay gas, electric, telephone or TV by putting a cheque in the post, why not bring it in to us? You will be helping us out and saving yourself a stamp! All cheques are made out to "Post Office Counters Ltd." and there are no extra charges for any of the above.

If you are booking a holiday abroad, then we issue E111's and also sell travel insurance, foreign currency and travellers cheques can be ordered with just four working days' notice. We also have information on various types of personal cover insurance.

If you want to send flowers, we offer bunches of flowers by post at very reasonable prices.

If you have any queries or require any further information, then come in and see us or telephone 984 3230. Also 'phone us if you need any groceries delivered. We will be happy to oblige.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Ron and Charlotte Jenkins

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Most readers of this magazine plus others who live in and around Purley will no doubt have received a "personal" letter from our vicar, sorry rector (neither to be confused with curate - the C of E does like its hierarchy/differentials doesn't it - is the last mentioned something to do with eggs?).

Seriously though, that appeal for maintenance - £50,000 - it seems quite modest these days for a parish of 5,400 people but who can get excited about **maintenance**? (Doesn't have much appeal does it!)

The bells, of course, that's it, that's different. Well now, a peal of church bells, quite nice if like Mapledurham's they are very much a distant sound - and I'm all right Jack where I live - but consider those who live close to the church, especially those modern houses built during the last 20 years. The noise of a peal of bells won't appeal much to them!

Now **if** the appeal was to landscape the church surroundings in a more presentable and appropriate manner - remove the eyesore of the car park in front, demolish all the houses that turn their backs on their historic churchyard setting (nothing against the owners - only the "planners" that let the housing application through) - **then** I would willingly dip into my hard earned savings for such an imaginative scheme.

Alternatively, **if** the appeal was to restore a Thames-side walk alongside the river, past the church and through up to the Roebuck, sorry Beethovens (removing the obstacles of gardens, fences and the odd bungalow in the way) **then** that too would also be much more exciting.

What a pity that our District Council and its predecessors allowed (couldn't prevent?) such insensitive building - houses that turn their back fences on the church, houses that block the riverside - oh and those extra houses squeezed in to the Wimpey estate.

Finally, the more we have planning, with all its restrictions and controls, the more mistakes, both aesthetic and practical, we seem to make.

Trevor Cotton,
Purley Village

LAUGHLINES

Young girl: "Do you think Father Christmas will be able to find us in our new house?"

Brother: "Of course he will. God knows where we are all the time and he will tell Jesus and Jesus will tell Father Christmas."

From the Merthyr Express:

"Treharris choir is seeking new members. No vice test given."

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

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I welcome contributions from anyone to this magazine, particularly on local issues and events. Please note, however, I reserve the right to edit contributions to suit space availability. Comments and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the P.C.C. of St. Mary's Church, Purley on Thames - sponsors of Purley Parish News.

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This month's magazine is published on **Saturday, 5th December**. All copy for the **January 1999** issue must reach me by **TUESDAY, 8th DECEMBER** and the magazine will be published on **Saturday, 2nd January**.

May I thank you for supporting Purley Parish News during 1998. On behalf of everyone involved in the publication of this magazine, may I wish all readers a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Editor