

# PURLEY PARISH NEWS

**MARCH 2006**



**35p**

For the Church & Community of  
**PURLEY ON THAMES**



# ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

## PURLEY ON THAMES

### RECTOR

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### BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

All enquiries should be made to the Rector

[www.stmarythevirgin.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.stmarythevirgin.fsnet.co.uk)

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## FROM THE RECTOR

Dear friends,

### ABOLITION OF THE POST OFFICE CARD ACCOUNT

I wonder if you know what the Post Office Card Account is, and that there are plans afoot to scrap it (see separate article)? Whilst at our Post Office the other day I learned that this facility is under threat and that it would have serious consequences for all Sub Post Offices if it ceases to be available. Local communities have been disintegrating for a long time now, and many are little more than places to sleep! For Sub Post offices to lose this significant aspect of their business will inevitably mean that their survival is called into question.

Sub Post Offices make up 97% of the National network, and are run by private business people. If our Post Office was to go out of business it would be a very serious loss to this community. All who use it know from experience what excellent service – often beyond the call of mere provision of stamps etc. – it gives. I understand that there are some two hundred Card Account holders in Purley who would be affected if this option comes to an end.

MP Kate Hoey tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) On 31 January 2006:

*That this House is gravely concerned by the Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) decision to withdraw support for the Post Office Card Account when the existing contract expires in 2010 and in particular by the Department's attempt to kill off the Account in advance of 2010, through pilot schemes being introduced immediately when it will deny to new benefit claimants the option of opening a Post Office Card Account, inform 35,000 existing customers that they will have to use a bank or building society instead of the Post Office Card Account and require them to provide their account details, and pay benefits of 2,500 existing customers into a bank account rather than the Post Office Card Account, ignoring the preferences they made when their benefit books were stopped; condemns the fact that, in breach of all plans, these pilot schemes are being introduced without consultation; and calls on the Government to halt these pilot schemes immediately and to institute an immediate review of the DWP's proposal to abolish the Post Office Card Account by 2010.*

On 13 February this EDM had been signed by 173 MPs. At that stage Martin Salter was not one of them so here is something for you to do by way of practical action and support for the retention of Sub Post Offices – write to Martin Salter and ask him to sign the Early Day Motion and do what he can to ensure that Card Accounts are not axed in this way. When this kind of situation arises, many people express feelings of concern, but fail to take any action. Feelings will change nothing. Your action can! So please pick up a pen, and write a letter of concern.

- The post office network is the largest retail branch network in the UK. It has 41 million visits a week and offers 170 different services.
- The network also provides free access to cash, keeps local shops going, is a focal point for communities and supports vulnerable residents.

Further information contact Georgina Daly at CobbPR, telephone 01323 416999.

And whilst on the subject of our Post Office – please use it as often as you can! Charlotte deserves our continued support, so it is over to you.

*Roger Howell*

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## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

This meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 April at 8pm at St. Mary's Church. In connection with this meeting the church Electoral Roll is being revised during the period 5 March to 2 April inclusive.

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**WWW.CHRISTIANITY.ORG.UK**

# CHURCH SERVICES

|        |         |                                        |
|--------|---------|----------------------------------------|
| 5 Mar  | 9.30am  | Family Worship                         |
|        | 11.15am | Holy Communion                         |
|        | 6.00pm  | Holy Communion with prayer for healing |
| 12 Mar | 9.30am  | Family Worship                         |
|        | 11.15am | Holy Communion                         |
| 19 Mar | 9.30am  | Family Communion                       |
|        | 11.15am | Morning Worship                        |
|        | 6.00pm  | Evening Worship                        |
| 26 Mar | 9.30am  | Family Worship                         |
|        | 11.15am | Holy Communion                         |
| 2 Apr  | 9.30am  | Family Worship                         |
|        | 11.15am | Holy Communion                         |
|        | 6.00pm  | Holy Communion                         |



Mon 8 May

Mon 31 July

Mon 30 October

**Tue 28 March**

Tue 20 June

Tue 19 September

Tue 12 December

Join Christians in Purley from many churches as we come together to give thanks to God for our village, and to pray - for individuals, families, schools, groups, activities etc. We start at 8pm and are finished by 9pm.

Sally Robertson – 962 5978 – [sally.a.robertson@ntlworld.com](mailto:sally.a.robertson@ntlworld.com) –  
Melyn Colyton Way (on the corner next to the shop)

Chris Rayers 942 1880 – [c.rayers@talk21.com](mailto:c.rayers@talk21.com) – 9 Allison Gardens

# FAREWELL TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD

Richard Harries has been Bishop of Oxford for the past 19 years. He retires at Easter. He will be visiting the Bradfield Deanery to bid farewell on Thursday 16 March at 8pm. All are welcome to attend this meeting which will be held at Douai Abbey, Woolhampton. The book *Public Life and the Place of the Church – reflection in honour of Bishop Richard* will be available on the evening - £12.

# WISDOM OF AGE

This is the title of a service of celebration and thanksgiving for all older people, their families, carers and those who work with and for them. It will be held at Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford on Sunday 12 March at 2.30pm with guest preacher: the Bishop of Oxford.

# **PANGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

By the time you read this Pangbourne Primary School PTA will have handed over the keys of a new mini bus to enable the children to be transported to and from sporting events all over the county.

Our next fund raising efforts are to replace Interactive White Boards throughout the school. We are planning to run an auction during the Pangbourne Village Fete on 17 June and are looking for donations of items such as a weeks use of a villa in the sun, a hot air balloon trip, light aircraft trip, a days worth of someone's trade, i.e. painter and decorator, carpenter, tiler, gardener, cook, etc., etc. If you can help please contact Jayne Evans on 0118 984 2433 or email [Jayne.Evans@pangbourne-on-thames.com](mailto:Jayne.Evans@pangbourne-on-thames.com). Thank You.

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## **PROJECT PURLEY**

### **YOUR HOUSE, MY HOME**

The January meeting of Project Purley took place quite appropriately in The Barn, one of the oldest buildings in the village, though it has of course been moved from its original location. The topic to be discussed was "Your House, My Home" and John Chapman introduced the subject by explaining the many different ways in which the history of houses and homes can be researched.

John explained that every house is interesting, if only for the history of the land on which it stands. Much source material is available, including electoral registers (in Purley these date from 1949), parish registers, newspaper cuttings, sale catalogues and an "up my street" website. Aerial photographs are excellent for comparing changes in land use, and John illustrated this by showing the contrast between Purley in 1964 when Purley Beeches had not been developed and Menpes Fruit Farm still existed, and the village in 2003 when the Marina had been established, and the Knowsley Road area was full of roads and housing. Despite the consequent reduction in open space, Purley is still essentially a rural village. There were also some fascinating photographs of the 2003 floods which caused such havoc in the river estate, part of Purley "under Thames" as it was described by the speaker.

Having captured the audience's attention, John went into more detail about how research can be conducted. For example, if one is finding out the history of a particular house, the topics to be investigated are the date when it was built, sale prices, what the land was used for previously, alterations that have been made, covenants affecting the property and whether there has been a change of name. The latter question may also apply to roads in the area, as evidenced by the Oxford/Reading Road, which has been the cause of much confusion over the years. Having gained as much information as possible, the researcher may decide to draw plans, take photographs, show the location on a map and also illustrate the building's orientation. A folder, CD with images, or magazine article may be produced if the intention is to share the evidence and information, but researchers must be circumspect about who has access to the details, or it may

become a burglar's guide. The occupants of the house are also, of course, entitled to privacy.

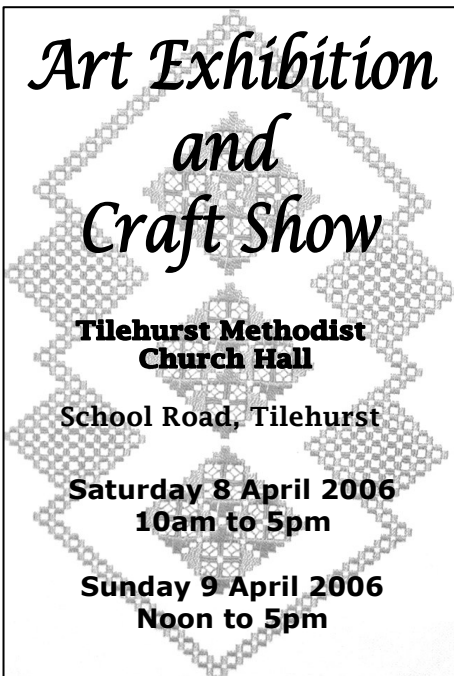
John completed his neatly illustrated introduction to the evening with the intriguing information that a house in Westbury Lane was until fairly recently used by MI5 as a safe house and, on one occasion, housed a defector from the KGB, who was later imprisoned by the British Government for offences committed in this country.

Then it was the turn of Project Purley members to talk about the history of their own houses, though time allowed each speaker to mention only brief details. Cliff Debney could plot the land on which his house stands on the 1900 map of Purley. The house was completed as recently as 1979 and stands next to the site of the Ice Box, a huge pit dug and filled with ice for the storage of food before the invention of refrigerators. Hazel King received the deeds of her home six years ago and from them, found that the land was formerly part of the Purley Park Estate until it was sold. The property in Highfield Road was completed as recently as 1958.

Elizabeth Burns had, like Cliff and Hazel, brought along the deeds to her property. Deed No.6 of July 1938 showed 858 feet of land on the original site being sold for £200 and the plans include provision for a proposed road through the area, though fortunately this has not happened yet and now seems unlikely. Catherine Sampson chose to talk about a different type of property and showed a "Camping and Caravanning Site Guide in Purley" dating from 1933. The guide spoke of the riverside attractions in the village, especially bathing and angling, and said that a caravan plot could be bought for any price from £5 to £50.

A change of name from "Dogberry" to "Midfield" for his property had been made by David Downs. He lives in an old converted farmhouse which still has the original air-holed larder window. While redecorating the kitchen he found a George V silver 3d piece and two Edward V11 brass farthings hidden under the mantelpiece, along with one red and yellow enamelled cufflink. Whether they dropped there by accident or were deliberately left as keepsakes will always be a mystery. The present occupiers were pleased to send Mrs. Lobjoit, who lived in the house over fifty years ago, some photographs of the property as it now looks on her one hundredth birthday in 2002.

A carefully annotated photograph album was used by Bernard Venners to illustrate



*Art Exhibition  
and  
Craft Show*

**Tilehurst Methodist  
Church Hall**

**School Road, Tilehurst**

**Saturday 8 April 2006  
10am to 5pm**

**Sunday 9 April 2006  
Noon to 5pm**

the progress made in the building of his residence in Purley Rise. He began work on the previously bare site in 1998 and did much of the work, including the cutting and fitting of the roof timbers, as well as the electrical installation, himself. Marion designed the garden, and the house is almost complete except for the garage doors. He added that, by coincidence, his mother had moved into the M15 safe house referred to by John Chapman earlier, though Bernard was keen to stress that she had absolutely no connections with the KGB!

However, perhaps the most unusual self-build design was that achieved by Pat Dean's family. Her husband worked for Trenthams and was based in Purley from 1962. The couple decided to build their own house in the area, bought a site in Long Lane and, despite the Arctic-like winter of 1963, completed the job in less than two years. They did everything, from foundations to roofing tiles and, as a bonus for their children, added a 23 feet tall rocket in the back garden, as well as a swimming pool with changing rooms. Little wonder that they have been happy enough to remain there for the past forty-three years.

*David Downs*

The next meeting of Project Purley will be in The Barn on Friday, 17 March. The Society's AGM will commence at 7.30pm followed at 8pm by Andrew Hutt speaking about Dovecots. Visitors are always welcome.

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## FAMILY INTERNET PROTECTION

How often have you searched for something on the Internet and ended up with more than you bargained for? And I don't mean spending too much on eBay!

Most Internet users have been exposed to websites containing pornographic images or other offensive content through innocent searches or simply by mistyping an address – the best known example being [www.thewhitehouse.com](http://www.thewhitehouse.com), which is **not** the US president's website!

Blue Coat is a supplier of Internet filter equipment to large corporations. They are making their technology available **free** for home users, in the form of K9 Web Protection. If you do not currently have parental control software, or even children, take a look at this solution and enjoy a safer surfing experience!

You can get K9 Web Protection from <http://www.getk9.com>.



## K9 Web Protection

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Please note that this software does not claim to be the complete solution to all risks associated with the Internet – please continue to ensure that you know what your children are doing with the Internet.

*Matthew Slingsby*  
*Editor, Parent and K9 Web Protection user*

# ADOPTED BOY

I would like to tell you about a little boy I have adopted for the past couple of years. His name is Gordon and he is six years old. He was rejected by his mother at birth and was brought up by someone called Mike who took him home and fed him day and night for over a year. As you will see from his picture, Gordon is a stunningly attractive orang-utan.

Gordon lives at Monkey World in Wareham, Dorset which is a world-famous ape rescue centre. This is a remarkable place which saves endangered and abused primates wherever they are found. You may remember a well-publicized case of a chimpanzee called Trudie. Film of her dreadful treatment was widely shown and a petition was organized to prevent her being returned to her owner. Trudie now lives in safety at Monkey World.



I went to Monkey World and was immediately attracted to Gordon who was very little at the time. He is unfailingly naughty but is the most endearing little creature. I go to see him every year because I have adopted him and I think he'd like to see me showing an interest in his progress. He is an important part of an international breeding programme as sadly, orang-utans are now no longer able to survive in the wild and it is acknowledged that they will be extinct in a few years unless bred in captivity. But Gordon isn't really interested in girls yet, he just loves playing and getting up to all kinds of mischief.

So, if you go to Dorset, do spend a day at Monkey World. It is a magical place and was awarded 'best day out in Dorset' last year. Give Gordon a wave from me!

Dorothy West

## PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

At the January Parish Council meeting the funding bids by the service committees, for the forthcoming financial year, were reviewed and agreed as follows after taking anticipated income into account:

|                                |              |                      |           |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Recreation Committee           | 25,750 gross | (less income 18,300) | 7,450 net |
| Highways & Footpaths Committee | 8,785 gross  | (less income 452)    | 8,333 net |
| Barn Management Committee      | 15,370 gross | (less income 12,000) | 3,370 net |
| Burial Ground                  | 1,900 gross  | (less income 6,000)  | 4,100 net |



Operating and capital expenses not devolved to service committees, and under central control, were also reviewed and the budgeted amounts are summarised below:

|                                                       |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Employment costs (clerk, caretaker, internal auditor) | 20,319              |
| Audit fee                                             | 650                 |
| Website provision                                     | 1,000               |
| Office/emergency control room costs/maintenance       | 5,790               |
| Members/officers meetings/training/costs              | 800                 |
| Insurance                                             | 9,000               |
| Machinery replacement/maintenance                     | 2,000               |
| Sundry site costs (Goosecroft)                        | 4,900               |
| Fees, subscriptions & legal costs                     | 2,100               |
| Provision for neighbourhood warden scheme             | 10,000              |
| Contingency                                           | 3,000               |
| Grants to local organisations                         | 5,000               |
| Loan repayment                                        | 500                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                          | <b>gross 65,059</b> |

In addition to the anticipated committee reductions above an additional amount of £3,500 is expected from interest and other income which enables the required total gross expenditure of £116,864 to be reduced to £76,612. This has been further reduced by a transfer from balances of £10,000 in respect of the provision for wardens which was also made last year when the project was delayed. Whilst no official notification has yet been made early indications are that the scheme, which is a venture jointly administered by West Berkshire Council and the Sovereign Housing Association, may well be expanded into Purley this year if additional finance is obtained.

These adjustments therefore required a precept on West Berkshire Council of £66,612 for collection with the 2006/2007 District Council tax. This represents less than a 2.5% increase on the precept required from the previous year whilst maintaining and extending services including the wardens. A calculation on the estimated tax base of £1,778.58 indicates the likely cost for band D properties to be £37.45 per annum which equates to an individual increase of less than 2%.

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

The office, located near the tennis courts, opens:  
  
Mondays (not BH): 5.45pm to 8.30pm  
Including an opportunity to meet  
Councillors between 6pm & 7pm  
Thursdays: 9.00am to 3.15pm  
  
Barn Manager: Jean Chudleigh 07917 453187

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

**www.purleyonthames.net**



## **PURLEY ON THAMES CC PRE-SEASON TRAINING 2006**

Indoor pre-season training for all age groups (from 6 years to Adults) has commenced.

Starters (aged 6/7/8) are being offered an "Introduction to cricket" course, based on the principles of long term athlete development and basic introductory cricket skills on Sunday afternoons from 2-3pm at Denefield School.

Under 9 sessions: Sunday 3-4.30pm at Denefield School.

Under 11 sessions: Sunday 4.30-6pm at Denefield School.

Under 13 sessions: Sunday 6-7.30pm at Pangbourne College Sports Hall.

Under 15 sessions: Sunday 7.30-9pm at Pangbourne College Sports Hall.

Current Berkshire Cricket League Premier Division Champions, Purley on Thames CC started indoor nets for adults on Monday 27 February at Bradfield College. The sessions are aimed at Under 17s and Adults and take place from 8.15-10.15pm. The club which runs 3 Saturday XIs in the Berkshire League as well as 2 Sunday XIs is looking to increase its adult membership with players of all abilities.

Either come along on the night or contact us for further details.

For full details please contact:

Martin Bishop (0118 945 3117) or Barry Carter (0118 942 2075)

If you are generally interested in participating: coaching, team administration, or helping behind the scenes with the ground or teas, please contact us and become part of our club. Don't worry if you have no previous experience - we are happy to assist with training...

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## **UK SUB-POSTMASTERS BLAST DWP'S "UNDERHAND TACTICS"**

Government plans to abolish the Post Office® Card Account - used by 4.3 million people every week to access their benefit payments - are already in full swing, says the National Federation of Sub Postmasters. The account is already being run down, some new claimants will be refused access to the facility from February 2006, and some existing customers will be stripped of their accounts without their consent, according to new information obtained by the NFSP.

The Department of Work and Pensions' intention to close the account in 2010, threatening the viability of thousands of post offices, was exposed by the Federation earlier this month. Now, it appears, the demolition process has already begun. The General Secretary of the NFSP Colin Baker said: "This is another body blow for the UK's sub-postmasters and their customers.

"Without warning, publicity or consultation, the DWP has started a stealth campaign to finish off the local post office as a place to collect benefits. The last benefit book was withdrawn only nine months ago. Our customers gave them up only after a struggle, and in the belief that the Government was committed to their local post office and to the new card account. Their trust was misplaced - as was ours," he added.

During February, the DWP will start to deny access to the card account with three separate pilot schemes designed purely to kill off the Post Office® Card Account:

- New benefit claimants will not be given the option to open a Post Office® Card Account
- 35,000 existing customers will receive a letter from the DWP telling them to use a bank or building society account and demanding their account details
- 2,500 existing customers will, without choice or consultation, find their benefits are no longer paid into their Post Office® Card Account, paying them instead to a bank account, totally ignoring the preferences they made when their benefit books were stopped

The Federation will this week [first week of February] launch a campaign in post offices to urge customers to resist what it calls "the underhand, bully-boy tactics the Government has chosen to employ." Colin Baker warned: "The Government refuses to acknowledge our customers' support for their post office or their right to choose how they access their benefits. We won't let Government stamp out people's right to choose. We urge everyone contacted by the DWP as part of this closure programme to simply say 'no'."

## **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE**

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### **SPRINGTIME IN THE GARDEN AT CHERRY ACRE**

Come along to Cherry Acre, Purley Village (nr infant school)

**Friday 31 March 11am-3pm and Sunday 2 April 1.30pm-4pm**

Wander in the garden to enjoy the spring flowers, especially the hundreds of flowering bulbs introduced over the years; Snakes Head Fritillary in the wild flower meadow; Cowslips and Primroses naturalised throughout.

Thyme Time Trail – Mini Orchard – Vegetable Plot – Rose Walkway

Sculptures – Activities for the children

Tea and Homemade Cake – Excellent Plant Stall

Admission by donation to St Mary's Church

# PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## AGM

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday, 15 February. Mr. J. Armstrong, Mrs. P. Brightwell, Mrs. W. Chapman, Mrs. M. Dabbs, Mr. J. Devine, Mr. R. Hawkins, Mr. J. Murphy & Mrs. M. Rolfe were all elected on to the Committee, but we still have one vacancy on the Committee. If there is a Society member who feels they can fill this vacancy, could they please contact Mrs. P. Brightwell (Secretary) on 941 2424. The meeting was well attended and after the official business had been completed, a presentation was made to Mr. George Critchell who has retired from the post of Treasurer after many years of service to the Society. After tea and biscuits, Mr. Ben Viljeon gave us a very interesting talk and slide show on "Mauritius".



## TALK

On Wednesday, 15 March, Mr & Mrs. P. Boor will give us a talk on "Fuchsias". This should be a very interesting evening from reports we have received, so please try to come along so that we have a good audience for these speakers. The talk will commence at 8 p.m. in Purley Memorial Hall.

## SPRING SHOW

This will take place on Saturday, 8 April in Purley Memorial Hall. Schedules are now available in the Trading Store. The Show will be open to members of the public from 2.30pm until 4pm. Tea and biscuits will be available. Even in you are unable to enter, please come along and support the participants.

## COACH TRIP

We are hoping to organize a trip to Lullingstone Castle, Kent on either Sunday, 25 June or Sunday, 2 July. If you are interested, a list with all the details is available from the Trading Store.

## TRADING STORE

The Trading Store is open Saturday and Sunday from 10am until 11am. Membership of the Society, costing only £1.50 for a year is tremendous value and you can buy items at the Store (in Purley Memorial Hall car park) at lower prices than most other sources. Further savings can be made on garden purchases at Collins of Pangbourne, BSB garden Machinery, Sulham Lane for new mowers, Englefield Garden Centre, Glenville Nursery, Bradfield Southend and Newington Nurseries, Newington on the A329 road, north of Shillingford. Please remember to show your membership card at the start of the transaction, as tills have to be set to deduct discount in some outlets. We stock peat free compost (New Horizon and John Innes) at the Store.

Happy Gardening!

*Marion Dabbs*  
942 2349

# **AVOID CAR CRIME**

## **A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL POLICE INSPECTOR**

Car crime is a local issue being tackled by your local police and West Berkshire Council.

A lot of vehicle crime results from criminals seeing opportunities and taking them. You can easily outsmart the thief by following the simple advice below, which you should remember even when your car is parked outside your house on the road or driveway.

- Always lock all your doors, close all your windows and sunroof every time you leave your car unattended- however briefly.
- Always remove your car stereo if you can – it's one of the most sought-after items in your vehicle. All car equipment - whether you can remove it or not - should be permanently marked in a visible place, with the vehicle's registration number.
- Don't leave any other items on display in your vehicle. There are a number of objects that are particularly desirable to the thief, including mobile phones, laptop computers, cash and credit/debit cards, vehicle registration documents and private mail – especially with your address on it. However, even an old coat on the back seat is a temptation for someone to 'smash and grab', they steal first and think about value later.
- Activate any security devices on your car when leaving it unattended.
- Try and park your car in a safe location, a garage is best, if not on your drive, or a well lit location. If your car is 'hidden away' in a quiet location a criminal will feel safer when trying to break into it.
- If you have a garage use it and make sure you lock the garage and the car in the garage.
- Keep your car keys safe, when you leave your vehicle always remove the key from the ignition and lock the doors. At home always keep your keys in a safe place which is out of sight and reach of windows, doors, letterboxes and cat-flaps.
- Be vigilant and report suspicious activity to the police.
- If you have any information relating to vehicle crime contact the police on 08458 505 505, or call CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.
- Do not buy stolen goods; the next victim could be you!

Thank you for your support

*Inspector Rodger Cartwright  
Pangbourne Neighbourhood Inspector*

# FIRST STEPS WITH COMPUTERS

Would you like to try using a computer?

Are you too nervous to join a class  
because you are uncertain whether computers are your thing?

## Help is at hand!

The Purley Memorial Hall Management Committee in conjunction with West Berkshire Council, Community Council for Berkshire and the Volunteer Centre is running a free taster course beginning Monday 8 May at 7pm in the Hall. The Taster course has three weekly sessions each lasting 2 hours. In that time you will learn how to switch on the computer, use a mouse, play simple games, make cards, cut and paste, insert photographs and use a digital camera.

If you are interested and would like a place on the course please send your name address and phone number to the Secretary, Mrs M Hoare, at 16 Beech Road Purley on Thames.

There are between 6 and 10 places on the course but if there is sufficient demand an extra course can be arranged.

*Thank you  
Marilyn Hoare*

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## GOING WALKABOUT

As many of you know – because I meet you – I am often to be seen walking our many rural footpaths with my bearded collie Dougal. I do, however, make the effort to go walkabout in the more developed parts of Purley from time to time... and did so last month.

Unfortunately, I sometimes find that all is not as it should be. Those of you who drive up Long Lane will know that it is a mess at the moment with all the development which is going on. We shouldn't forget, however, that it is even worse for the people who live there. In particular, parking is very restricted because of all the road works and is spilling over into neighbouring roads, which can make life a misery for the residents.

Some of the worst offenders, unfortunately, are school run parents, some of whom seem to think they have the right to park where they like, irrespective of the impact on others. I am getting regular reports of people being unable to get in and out of their homes because inconsiderate motorists block their driveways or obstruct road junctions, so please think before you park.

Further up Long Lane, just inside the Purley Parish boundary, is a new development called The Malyns. I was shocked to see that the developer has gated this estate, despite having planning permission for gating refused and losing an appeal. Needless to say, West Berkshire Council's enforcement officer has been informed and the Parish Council will be keeping a close watching brief.

Not only is the gating of developments inappropriate in a village like Purley, where we pride ourselves on being inclusive rather than exclusive, but it is already causing problems with traffic tailbacks as residents wait for the gates to open before they can turn in. I dread to think what sort of problems these gates could cause for the emergency services if there were to be a fire or medical emergency.

Turning east from Long Lane brought me to the small area of natural woodland known as Pikeshaw. This is owned and maintained for the community by the Parish Council and I was pleased to find it looking particularly good at the moment, thanks to the efforts of the Pikeshaw Working Group chaired by Parish Councillor John Devine and including local residents. Much tidying and tree planting took place in the latter part of last year and the (sometimes muddy) footpaths have been improved with wood chippings.

Pikeshaw was notably litter-free when I visited. Credit here must go to a small number of volunteer litter-pickers, although the addition of two of our new, larger litter bins must also be playing a part. In fact, litter seems to have been significantly reduced in all the areas where we have placed new bins and the installation of three more is budgeted for in 2006/7.

Moving down the footpath to Oxford Road, however, I was shocked by the amount of litter lying around. This was at its worst where the footpath joins the Oxford Road, opposite the top of New Hill, and in the nearby bus shelter.

The Parish Council maintains close contact with the District Council over street cleaning in the area and we hope to see improved litter picking included in a new contract. We are also looking at our own contractual arrangements. However, there is no doubt that volunteer litter-pickers can make a big difference. Anybody who is prepared to help out by picking litter from one of the worst affected areas on a regular basis should contact the Parish Clerk, who will provide the necessary equipment.

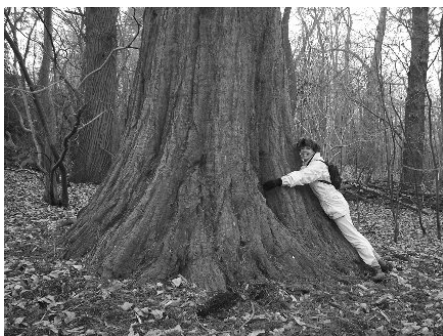
*David Betts*  
*Chairman, Purley on Thames Parish Council*  
*david.betts@purleyonthames.net*

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## **PURLEY PATHFINDERS**

### **A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES**

It's such a joy to be out in the fresh winter air: the beauty of skeletal trees, allowing uninterrupted views across a landscape, catching breath before the rush of spring. Our last January walk saw us exploring a lovely wooded landscape from Upper Basildon into Ashampstead. As one bridleway after another led us through the delightful Ashampstead Woods, we soaked up some of the history of this ancient area, where flints have been found dated from the Middle Stone Age, 5,000–2,500BC! Permanent settlements, however, appeared from 1066, and we spotted house names of Stubbles and Pightle, both of which refer to clearing of land. We clearly saw the large bank and ditch beside our woodland path, which



dates from around 1240 when the Lord of the Manor created a deer park and needed to make a barrier to keep the deer confined. Further on we paused beside some amazing Wellingtonias with huge trunks. The groundsman of Sir Watney (the beer baron) had to hide the young trees down his trouser leg ready to plant to avoid being spotted by some residents who uprooted the trees as soon as they were planted. Gladly some have survived to grow to majestic proportions. Passing

Burnt Hill, where bricks were baked in huge mounds, we came across Kiln Pond which dates from around 1860, and is said never to dry up. It is 10 feet deep in the centre, and farmers used to travel from as far afield as Aldworth to take their carts right into the water to soak their wooden wheels. This caused them to expand, so forming a tight fit onto the iron frame. Back at Upper Basildon we enjoyed lunch at the welcoming Red Lion whilst musing over our interesting and informative walk.

Just as winter seems to be dragging its heels, out pop plucky little snowdrops to lift our spirits. We make the most of them during their short season. Our February walks become something of a treasure hunt for these precious pearls. We met in Woodcote during Candlemas week, when traditionally snowdrops, or *Candlemas Bells*, are used to decorate altars during the *blessing of the candles*. Within moments of leaving behind Victorian cottages and Edwardian villas, we were in open countryside with misty views ahead towards Didcot. Crossing a set-aside field, it was lovely to hear the song of the skylarks, thriving here on seeds from arable weeds, so often treated with pesticides on farmed land – thought to be one cause of the decline of this special bird. We paused at a gate to take in the scene with sheep grazing peacefully in the field, and below, the striking buildings of Elvendon Priory. We dropped down the field, causing a sheep stampede, and were greeted by swathes of snowdrops, lighting up the bank with their bright white lamps. The second part of our walk contrasted with the openness of the first as we plunged into the woodland of The Great Chalk Wood. We entered a *tunnel* through frosty looking old man's beard, which soon gave way to merry yellow catkins. With this experience of walking from winter into spring, we could have been forgiven for thinking that we were in Narnia! More woodland at Crays Pond formed the final leg of our walk. As we emerged opposite a converted chapel, (dated 1886), we enjoyed further swathes of snowdrops to end our lovely walk.

There can't be a better village to visit during the snowdrop season than Ecchinswell. This attractive village was designated a conservation area in 1990 in recognition of the abundance of special architectural and



historically interesting buildings in the village – 26 of which are Grade II listed. Our walk began by passing three of these in the form of the Victorian School and Schoolhouse, and the old Mill House. Soon, surrounded by countryside, we gazed across to Watership Down. Snowdrops, and the odd primrose, lined our route as we arrived at Nuthanger Farm where Hazel, Fiver and their furry friends were in danger of being fattened up for meat in Richard Adam's famous tale. We dropped down to enter more inspiring countryside within the Sydmonton Estate, home of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. Fields of fine horses watched us with interest as we approached the immaculate Watership Farm. Then, continuing down a leafy lane, we could hear frantic bleating. Soon the source of this cacophony was revealed as we came across a field of lambs calling to their mums. A sure sign of the approaching spring, but for now we relished in the beauty of the winter snowdrops as they formed a fabulous wide fringe to the final avenue which was to take us to the end of our inspiring walk.



Our February Social Event took place at Welford Park where we gathered to walk amongst an amazing number of snowdrops which transform the ground beneath the beech trees into a breathtaking scene akin to those televised from the winter Olympics! After a pleasant lunch in the Tea Room there was time to explore inside the adjoining church, and to search out some snowdrop inspired souvenirs in the gift shop.

On our March walks we will be on the lookout for signs of spring as winter loses its grip. We will be continuing our *Waterways* theme as we walk beside the River Thames between Hurley and Marlow; the River Kennet and the Holybrook near Reading; the River Pang at Stanford Dingley, and The Thames again at Marsh Lock. The month will finish by honouring the bicentenary of Brunel as we walk beneath one of his famous bridges, and ride back on his Great Western Railway. If any ladies would like to join us, then do ring for a programme. Photos taken on our walks can be viewed on our website:

**[www.purleypathfinders.co.uk](http://www.purleypathfinders.co.uk)**

*Nicki Woodward*  
984 2112 ([niw2001@lineone.co.uk](mailto:niw2001@lineone.co.uk))

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## **PURLEY KEEP FIT CLASS**

Our move from Battle hospital has been very successful and our sessions in The Barn in Purley are very enjoyable.

We have lots of space now, and can take more people. If you would like to know more ring me.

*June Mycroft*  
967 6376

## **THE COMMUNITY FURNITURE PROJECT**

This is a local charity providing furniture, household goods, electrical items and toys at low cost to people living on a low income in Newbury, Basingstoke and surrounding areas. The charity would welcome donations of electrical items (these are checked by their qualified electrician before they are sold), furniture (must have fire safety label), household goods like curtains, bed linen, crockery and cutlery, and toys and baby equipment. They do not deal with clothes. If you have anything to donate or would like further information please telephone 01635 43933 or contact the charity through their website [www.cfpnewbury.org.uk](http://www.cfpnewbury.org.uk).

CFP is open from Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4pm, closed for lunch from 12.30pm to 1pm. They are also open the first Saturday of every month from 9.30am to 12.30pm. They can collect larger items within their collection area; they usually need 7-14 days notice for a collection.

By using CFP you are helping to protect the environment. Good quality furniture and other items, which might have added to the increasing problem of landfill waste, are being reused and helping someone else make a home.

## **PURLEY W.I.**

We are arranging a trip to Highgrove in April, an appropriate month to appreciate Prince Charles' gardens. Many security precautions are underway – do you think he will want our fingerprints?

Our speaker, Chris Smallbone (who once lived in Caversham) gave a chilling talk called "The Longest Night." An active character with a spirit of adventure, he decided, at the age of 27 and single, to spend Christmas on a cruiser rather than with his family. Off he went for fun, food and frolic. When he dutifully attended life-boat drill on the 23,000 ton boat renamed Lakonia, he realised he was the only one there (now attendance at such drills is compulsory).

Whilst watching a Bob Hope film the audience was aware of continuous bell ringing – was it a fire bell they asked? It was and the loud speaker system had failed. Masses of people now shuffled to the life boat station, which meant 1,000 people gave way to the boat tilting at 45 degrees. Now in complete darkness, passengers needed to be lowered to the water line. As the boat was now at an angle, this meant that the life boats could not slide down the side of the cruiser, but were waving about a few feet away. The Lakonia itself had had a previous life; had been given a complete overhaul and "over-generously" painted white, so much so that the paint had clogged many working parts on the life boats. Chris felt it was safer to remain on the ship for as long as possible, but when he did jump into the water, found he was being sucked under the ship. What happened when passengers jumped into the sea was that they jumped feet first landing on other passengers and sustaining broken backs and necks. Chris was in the water for many hours complete with life jacket, when suddenly he "met" three survivors. One lady was so distressed he insisted she kept talking to him. Sadly in the dark she disappeared.

The rot now set in for him also; he was losing heart, was so cold, so tired, had developed cramp and hypothermia and then, as a result of all this, his coordination failed. At last dawn broke through and wonderfully the sun appeared. He had now drifted towards two ships which were shown up by the light of the fire which blasted like a blow torch. The ships had remained about seven miles away – apparently it is a rule of the sea that ships should keep that distance from a vessel likely to explode for their own safety. Two crew men from one ship threw him a life saving rope which unfortunately landed round his neck rather than around his body. Lucky fellow that he was he managed to be saved and made straight for the warmth of the boiler room where he stripped and dried his clothes. Arriving in Casablanca, he realised that in the back pocket of his trousers were three dried out pieces of paper. One was a pound note, one a dining room card and the third the torn corner of an envelope with the address of a nurse he had met. 155 people died from this disaster on 22 December 1963 and, as we all listened in stunned silence at this incredible story and realised what a lucky and determined man Chris was, we were more than thankful that the story had a happy ending. Yes, he married the nurse and lived happily ever after. Thank goodness. (NB: There are a couple of books detailing this disaster – one entitled The White Ship.)

Flower competition      1<sup>st</sup> Pamela James and Sylvia Conquest

Favourite Night Cap      1<sup>st</sup> Sylvia Conquest.

Next month, the meeting will be our General Meeting when we will vote for a new Committee and take part in a Beetle Drive. It will be held on Wednesday, 8 March at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley commencing at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome.

*Sylvia Conquest*  
941 1936

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## CALLING ALL CONTRIBUTORS!

I have had a few problems with submissions for the magazine recently. In an effort to avoid any reoccurrence, can I please ask the following?

- Please don't send me Microsoft Publisher files – I can't open them!
- If you are sending a large file (e.g. with pictures), please use my alternative email address (matthew.slingsby@yahoo.com), but let me know on the normal address (so I remember to look!)
- If you know somebody who could write an article for this magazine, please encourage them to do so. I know there are groups out there that are not being represented, and I'd love to hear from them.



*Thanks,  
Matthew*



**Purley Players** would like to thank those who have supported their performances over the last few years. One of the aims of the Group is to donate its profits to local charities and since our Jubilee Show in 2002 the Players have donated in excess of £2,300. Following our Victory Party last May we were able to donate £350 to the Reading Branch of The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association – Forces Help.

In March 2004 a decision was made to raise funds to purchase our own staging and so profits received from recent productions have been used for this purpose. The Players are pleased to say that they took delivery of about two-thirds of their staging requirements in August 2005 but still have to raise funds to purchase the remaining one-third. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Parish Council to enable us to make this very important stride forward for the Group.

We used the staging for our Murder Mystery production in November and were also pleased to loan it out to the Church for their Harvest Supper and recently to the Thames Vale Singers.

We hope that all of you who came to see our pantomime, Aladdin, at the Barn last month enjoyed it as much as we did and we are pleased to advise that any profit from the show will be donated to Brookfields School, Tilehurst. We look forward to seeing you at our summer production details of which will be advised during the spring.

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## LETTERS

### **MORE ABOUT *ANXIOUS TIMES***

I thought readers might like an update following my reply to the letter about *Anxious Times* in last month's issue. Since then, the author of the original letter has contacted me and I now know the street in question. I will respect their desire to keep this under wraps.

The residents still have concerns and I have established a direct link between them and the Neighbourhood Police Team at Pangbourne. However, a check of the Police logs reveals that only a handful of incidents from this area have been phoned in over the last few months, so there were no grounds to identify this as a hotspot.

Nevertheless, the Police have undertaken to step up patrols in the area, but they are keen to receive more detailed information about the problems. I make no excuse for repeating the following advice, which was circulated recently via Neighbourhood Watch coordinators:

If you witness a crime taking place, whether it is a burglary, vehicle crime, vandalism or people acting suspiciously, especially during the early hours of the morning, always phone 999, but if you wake up in the morning and the criminals have left the scene, please then phone the Police Enquiry Centre on 08458 505 505 to report the crime.

The Police would like us to write down good descriptions such as male or female, approximate age and height (compare to fixed item such as a fence), hair colour and length etc, any distinguishing features, clothing and footwear such as type, colour and whether the clothing was fitted or baggy and in new or old condition. Whether shoes were clean or muddy would also be useful.

If a vehicle is involved, please write down the make and model (if known), colour, whether saloon or estate, registration number (even part of the number may help) and the direction or road the vehicle is going down.

If you do witness a crime, please check whether your neighbours also saw it happening and can identify the suspects or provide further information.

In closing, the residents of this street have now signed up for Neighbourhood Watch. If your street still doesn't participate and you are interested in getting involved, please contact Romy Freiburghaus on 01635 264718 or via email: - romy.freiburghaus@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

*David Betts*  
*Chairman, Pangbourne and District Neighbourhood Action Group*  
*david.betts@purleyonthames.net*

**REF. PURLEY LANE  
RESURFACING**

How is it possible Purley Lane has been earmarked once again for resurfacing when this had only been carried out 3-4 years ago and New Hill is in desperate need, the holes are filled in and the hill patched up but New Hill is an accident waiting to happen, there is very little grip for our car tyres and there are hotspots i.e. on the exit to the Oxford Road and just before the bridge uphill where we stop to give way to oncoming traffic. When I wrote to West Berks Council the response I received was that they deem it safe and would not resurface until 2007/8 'funds permitting', I have carried out a mini 'survey' of friends and neighbours who are of like mind- Resurface New Hill SOON.

*R. Pink*

It's a  
Family Affair



Saturday 18th March

4.30 – 7.00 p.m.

Food and fun for all the family

A supper with a difference!!

Fairtrade treasure trail ~ Chance to give thanks

|          |                    |     |
|----------|--------------------|-----|
| Tickets: | Adults             | £10 |
|          | Children           | £5  |
|          | Family (5 or more) | £20 |

All profits to Traidcraft Exchange

More info, contact Pam Slingsby [961 5585]



## SURVEY SHOWS HIDDEN BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

**Home-Start West Berkshire has been working locally for 9 years and currently has 32 volunteers supporting 36 families across the area.**

Research published by the UK's leading family support charity has shown that the personal benefits of volunteering are significant, even if the volunteer's original motives were purely altruistic.

Of the 1500 surveyed, results show volunteers' self esteem, self worth, social life, and confidence had all been boosted by their work with families.

"As I supported families, I grew from being the past victim of domestic violence to someone in control of her life. I'm still in contact with the first family I visited – I'm so proud of her and me." said a volunteer who took part.

Another said "It has been, and continues to be, a positive influence within my life, both personally and professionally."

Others said "It's been a roller coaster of experience – I've gained as much as I've given" and "I'm continually amazed at what I learn, especially about myself.

ARE YOU.....

- A parent or grandparent with skills to share?
- Returning to work following a career break?
- Looking for a way to improve your CV to get the job you really want?
- Newly retired but have time on your hands?
- Wanting to meet new people?
- Wanting to put something back into your community?

Home-Start West-Berkshire needs experienced parents to offer friendship and support to other parents with young children, going through a difficult time in their lives, by visiting them at home on a weekly basis. We offer a free informal preparation course for potential volunteers, covering topics such as values and attitudes, child protection, family life, communication, commitment, boundaries and support. The next course will be held in Theale each Thursday for 10 weeks starting 20 April from 10am–2pm school term time only. All expenses will be paid.

If you would like details of this course, or would like to help support a family with young children by visiting them for a few hours a week, please call Jo or Angela on 01635 500860 for an informal friendly chat.



## PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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

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

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

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## Purley Parish News

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I welcome all contributions to this magazine, particularly on local issues and events. Contributions can either be delivered in writing or by email. Please note however, I reserve the right to edit contributions to suit space availability and to maintain consistency of style (font etc). Local event adverts can be accommodated but space is limited; landscape format copy is preferred in this case as it allows a ½ page entry to be published. If specially preparing content, please set your page size to A5.

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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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|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
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