



your **Berkhamsted** *for town and parish*

Interview with Christopher Douglas - Radio 4's Ed Reardon

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October 2010

50p

From the Editor October 2010



The Parish Magazine of St Peter's Great Berkhamsted

Welcome to the first issue of *Your Berkhamsted*, the magazine for town and parish.

Although the magazine has a new name and look we are but the latest chapter in the life of a publication that began in 1874. The magazine has had a number of names during the past 136 years: *The Dawn of the Day*, *The St Peter's Parochial Review* and, of course, until last month the *Berkhamsted Review*.

So, why this latest change? Inevitably, a new editorial team brings with it new opinions and ideas. While recognising the excellent job done by Christopher Green and his predecessors we have considered new possibilities and goals for the magazine. Throughout this process we have also been careful not to instigate change for change's sake. The philosophy behind the magazine's new name is eloquently explained in Fr Michael's leader, which you can read opposite. Our aim is for *Your Berkhamsted* to 'explore the past, reflect the present and look to the future of Berkhamsted and its residents.'

In order to fulfil this goal we hope that the magazine will engage its readers and encourage you to contribute articles and letters.

And who are your new editorial team? I am a relative newcomer to the town, having lived here for just over three years. During that time I have been actively involved in the community, specifically with the Berkhamsted Film Society and the hospital radio station in Hemel Hempstead. Fiona Powell is a Scot, who has lived in Berkhamsted for the last three years. She enjoys being part of such a warm and active community and will be on the editorial team for 2010. Cathy Edmonds has lived in Berkhamsted for ten years and her mother, aunts and uncles all went to school here. She is an active member of St Peter's and a full time mum. In her spare time Cathy runs a cake making business. The team is supported in all its tasks by Fr John Pritchard.

Since moving here I have often been struck by the number of interesting, talented and inspirational people who live in Berkhamsted, and by the fascinating history of the town. Certainly there is no shortage of things to say about Berkhamsted's past, present or future. I hope you will want to be part of that conversation.

Ian Skillicorn, Editor

For all editorial and advertising contacts, and for copy dates, please refer to page 30

Cover photo: "Autumn scene, Dockey Wood, Ashridge" by Luis Costa. View more local images at www.luiscostaphotography.com.

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Your Berkhamsted by Fr Michael Bowie



As the new title of this magazine, the successor of the *Berkhamsted Review*, suggests the intention in publishing it is to reflect and foster

a sense of community in this town and parish.

‘Ownership’ is sometimes a tired piece of jargon to express our participation in an activity or group, but this magazine is seeking to encourage active participation, not just a commitment to jargon. The use of the word ‘ownership’ to mean active participation has increased at just the time when fewer people than ever take an active part in politics and the general business of life threatens the admirable British tradition of volunteering.

Volunteering as a key element in communities has been much stronger in this country than most. It is part of the traditional British preference for the gifted amateur over the dogged professional. Government regulation and the challenges of the employment market together with rising house prices have actively eroded people’s ability, let alone willingness, to run communities and their amenities purely with voluntary or amateur expertise.

It is easy enough to see how this follows from a combination of economic pressure from the employment and housing markets with a culture of risk-avoidance promoted by the state which (I suggest) has an interest in keeping us anxious. But

we don’t have to accept this trend; indeed I suggest we should actively oppose it.

Very many of the things which make this town an attractive and pleasant place to live are the result of people giving freely of their time and energy, and sometimes even their financial resources. In the church we are accustomed to think of volunteering as a natural way of life: from a human point of view the church is essentially a voluntary society. Of course we believe that the church is much more than a human society: for us it is a gathering of people in the service of God, from which many activities, from worship to charitable works, follow. In all that we always have to learn ‘ownership’ of our particular group of Christians and what we do together. So ‘ownership’ means relationship as well, which is the core of the Christian faith: relationship with God and with each other as equally children of God.

This new version of a ‘parish and town’ magazine is intended to express ownership and relationship in the wider community while remembering that the church is a focal part of that human society as well as a point of connection with God. So the title *Your Berkhamsted* implies for us another truth – that St Peter’s is *Your Church*. That’s why it is open every day of the year and why, if you ask us to do something for you, we’ll always try to say yes. But of course we’d also like you to take more active ‘ownership’ of it in worshipping God with us. The door is open for that reason as well. **JB**

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Strangers in the country

During the Second World War Berkhamsted hosted some rather unusual VIPs. Jenny Sherwood explains

Many of London's most cherished possessions, including primarily the Coronation Chair in Westminster, were removed to places of safety when the capital was threatened by enemy raids during the Second World War. Among them many statues of English Kings and notables were also evacuated and some were removed to the grounds of a ruined castle in the Home Counties. William III, who used to dominate Cockspur Street, was so tall that the normal approach through a well-known country town was impossible and a long detour had to be made. Residents of nearby villages wondered whether a new sort of circus was going on tour as poor old William was bumped along country lanes to the ruined castle of his predecessors. The exact whereabouts of these London statues was kept a secret for several years. The few photographs which appeared in the press had captions such as 'Somewhere in rural England.'

William III attired as a Roman General, the Burghers of Calais from Victoria Gardens on the Embankment and Field Marshall Lord Wolseley from Horse Guards Parade were of course in the grounds of our castle at Berkhamsted, where they spent the duration of the war. They were surrounded by barbed wire because as the *Illustrated London News*, 26th September 1942 expressed it 'irrepressible excursionists were wont to carve their initials on them'.

The removal of these statues, especially that of William III must have been a complicated logistical exercise. One can



clearly envisage the necessary detour to avoid the railway bridge

by the station and understand the interest such a cargo must have aroused in Potten End and other villages it passed through. Once the statues had been installed in their new home they provided a useful history lesson for the local schoolchildren and those also evacuated from London.

In November 1940 an event took place about half a mile away which showed that these statues were not as safe from enemy bombing as had previously been thought. A former resident of Ellesmere Road wrote in 1980 her memories of the night the Ivy House Lane Bridge was bombed.

'The bombers were going overhead all night on their way to bomb Coventry. On the way back one of the planes appeared to get lost and dropped its missiles onto the railway which ran parallel with our houses, evidently following the lights of a moving train.

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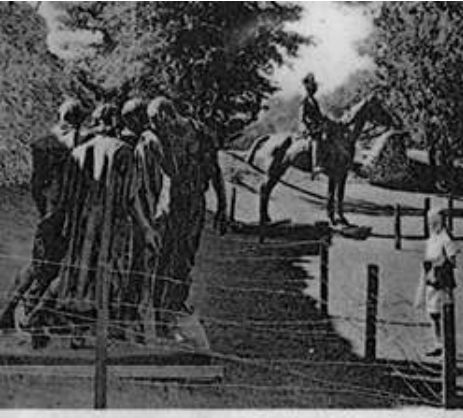
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The little bridge that spanned the lines blew up... The bridge received a direct hit. It was blown apart leaving a gaping hole and cutting us off from the easy access to the allotments and the church.' Percy Birtchnell states in his *Short History of Berkhamsted* that a train was derailed but no one suffered serious injury.

The destruction of the bridge features in the minutes of a Sunnyside Parochial Church Council meeting held on 7th December 1940 at 3pm under the item 'Sunnyside Bridge': 'The disappearance of the Sunnyside Bridge due to enemy action had received attention from the Vicar and churchwardens who had written the L.M.S. Railway explaining that the major part of the parish was cut off from the church and asking that the Bridge should be reconstructed at an early date. A reply had been received stating that the whole question had been referred to the Ministry of Transport who would decide whether a bridge would be erected or not. It was stated that the Allotment holders were also appealing to the Ministry of Transport.'

In order for parishioners of Hall Park, Swing Gate Lane and the Ellesmere Road area to reach the church a long detour was necessary via Gravel Path through the allotments, through Meadway or by approaching from the Common. Earlier a level crossing from Bank Mill Lane by Rose Cottage led to a track, which met Ivy House Lane in the dip half way up the lane. This had probably already fallen out of use by this time.

Since the bridge does not receive further mention in the minutes for a number of years it is to be assumed that the temporary footbridge, which replaced the damaged bridge, was erected in the next few months. However, it was eight years, in 1948, before the road bridge was finally replaced. We turn again to the minutes of the PCC, October 4th 1948. 'In answer to a letter from the Council to the Chief Engineer, a reply was received stating, it was hoped, conditions being suitable, to finish the bridge the week before Christmas.' By that time the visiting statues from London had been back in their rightful places for several years! **yB**

Help us to write about Berkhamsted's history

A key aim of *Your Berkhamsted* is to explore the town's history.

We welcome articles and photographs about interesting people, events or buildings from Berkhamsted's past.

If you would like to suggest a subject for a future issue please get in touch with the editor, Ian Skillicorn, on 862628 or at by sending an email to editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

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A creative light in Berkhamsted

Rose Scarborough introduces us to a corner of creativity in our town



Recreate has been illuminating creative possibilities in Berkhamsted for the past three years and we are thrilled to be contributing to the first issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

We are a CIC (Community Interest Company) a not for profit organisation set up to serve the local community with opportunities to access arts and crafts classes. We have had artists as young as 3 finding there creative feet and some folk over 70 coming to discover the artistic child which is within all of us.

Pablo Picasso said 'All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.' At recreate we hope that we can help children hold on to the artists they are and encourage adults to rekindle their childhood artist. We do that whether they are in a drawing class, one of our sewing groups, part of our monthly play reading circle or at a live music event. All art forms have a place at recreate.

Apart from our in house programme we

have lots of projects that involve the wider community. We will often be found providing craft workshops at Sure Start centres or as part of an Opportunities Day for young people with disabilities.

As part of our future projects programme we would like to introduce **Light Up the Night** to Berkhamsted.

Lanterns and outdoor celebration are part of lots of diverse cultures from China and Japan through to Africa and Europe. The lantern represents a positive metaphor for community optimism and hope throughout the world. Towns and cities across the globe have events where their communities come together and create a magical evening. Different places do different things. Many have parades or processions, some lay out lanterns to be discovered or use lanterns to highlight particular areas of their village, town or city. Some use the lanterns as a symbol of remembrance or hope.

What will Berkhamsted do? Well that is up to you. Recreate will be at *Your Berkhamsted's* launch event and would love to meet you and talk about starting our own 'Night Light' tradition.

Recreate will continue to shine a light on creative endeavours; it would be wonderful if you joined us. **JB**

Come and meet us at The Court House, next to St Peter's church, from 10am to 2pm on Saturday 9th October, or email recreateoffice@gmail.com

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Meet the Head

Fr John Pritchard meets Claire Bull, the new Head Teacher at Victoria First School and Nursery

Can you tell me about yourself and what attracted you to apply for the Headship of Victoria First School?

I love seeing live music – anything from Glastonbury to the local pub band and am learning to play the ukulele! The reason I applied for Victoria was that I wanted to work in a school which had a Nursery but also had children older than I had been teaching for the last few years. A First school was perfect. Victoria is in the centre of the community which I also like and finally when I visited the school I found everyone to be so friendly.

What inspires you most about First School Education and how do you view the three tier system in Berkhamsted?

I love First school education as it gives the children a start to their school life within an environment specific to them. A First school can create a family atmosphere and develop the confidence of the Year 4s as they take on responsibilities. Having moved from Buckinghamshire I have not had experience of the three tier system before. I can see that the middle school can be a useful transition stage before progressing onto senior school. Some parents have said to me that they felt their children grew up a lot in middle school and were more ready for senior school at 13 than at 11.



How do you see faith schools contributing to a child's education and development?

Faith schools provide a choice for parents who wish to have their children educated in a school where that faith is an intrinsic part of everyday life. As they progress through their school life their education has a central core of that faiths key values and will, hopefully form the foundations for the child to develop into an adult

with those same key values.

How do you see the role of parents / carers in the education of children?

They are the children's first teachers and it is our job to work together with them to develop every child's potential. I have always had a fantastic relationship with parents through developing good lines of communication and an understanding of what we are trying to do in school and how parents can support that.

What are you reading at the moment?

Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell. Big Book Of Stupid Jokes (trying to learn some to tell the children!).

If you had to choose between OFSTED and parents? Who would you rather see on a cold Monday morning in November?

My experience of 3 OFSTEDs have all been positive (!) but I would probably say

My life as Ed Reardon

Ian Skillicorn talks to Christopher Douglas, the man who put Berkhamsted on the map for Radio 4 listeners

How do you and your co-writer go about storylining and writing the scripts?

It takes us a couple of days to come up with the story - a main plot and a sub-plot. The most important thing is finding the turning point of the main plot. Once we've got that we make a rough list of scenes and off we go INT. ED'S FLAT. FX TYPING... etc. We work alternately at Andrew Nickolds's house in Cambridge or at mine in London. We always have the same thing for lunch; a ciabatta or baguette filled with a combination of ham, cheese and tomato. He buys his from a fashionable deli but when we work at my house I purchase the components from Morrison's and assemble them at a fraction of the cost. It's an arrangement that sums up our respective personalities.

Do you have any real-life experience of creative writing/screenwriting groups?

About ten years ago I taught a comedy writing course for New York University. It was possibly the most useful job I've ever done - useful to me that is, the students were all far too rich and clever to exhaust themselves in the creative struggle. The experience forced me to watch a great many American sitcoms and to put into words what works in comedy scripts and what elements the successful ones have in common. I came out of it a much better writer.

Did you watch Tenko and if so what did you think of it?

I never saw it but BBC shows of that era



used to rehearse in a purpose built block at Acton. I was a regular character in a series called The Onedin Line which rehearsed next door to Tenko. I remember the girls talking very seriously about the grittiness of the scripts so it seemed a natural fit for Ed's CV. Stephanie Cole who is a regular character in Ed Reardon's Week was in it.

Are Felix and Ping based on real life experiences of agents and their assistants?

No, they are generic. Some publishers and literary agencies are partly staffed by unpaid or very low paid graduates from posh families. Only this year a large publishing house was bought by its own work-experience boy. Ping (Pandora Ingleby-Thomas) is one of this breed and Felix is an archetypal agent of the old school - gentlemanly and ruthless. I once knew a literary agent who handled the deals on so many ghosted autobiographies and novels that he came to believe all

books were written by ghost writers. When Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* came up in conversation once he said 'Now wait a minute, let me think who wrote that.'

What do you think is Ed Reardon's appeal for the listener?

He's a loser and he's right about quite a lot of things. Most of us feel the world should listen more to what we have to say - and also pay us better. I have created or helped to create two other long-running characters Nicholas Craig the appalling actor and Dave Podmore the hopeless professional cricketer. Both Nicholas and Pod are ridiculously over-rewarded for their incompetence but Ed always loses out and so many more people feel an affinity with him.

What are your memories of working on Crossroads?

In 1974 I appeared as a sixteen year-old runaway called Martin Bell (really). After a few episodes they decided to make me the motel's cheeky yet likeable barman. They had to give Martin two birthdays in two weeks so that he'd be old enough to serve drinks in the bar. Not one of the 18 million people who were said to watch the programme in those days raised any objection to this bizarre bit of storylining. After a year and a half in the show my end came, as it did for many, by being sent to get some sandwiches from the cafeteria. The words 'Would you mind going to the cafeteria...' were like Blind Pew's black spot to a Crossroads actor. Some months after my long, lonely walk to the Cafeteria I switched on the programme at the moment when one of the regulars was saying 'I've just had a postcard from Martin. He's in Argentina.' 'What's he

doing there?' said the other actor. 'Dunno.'

Quick quiz question - which of these people never lived in Berkhamsted: John Cleese, Frank Bough or Charles de Gaulle?

John Cleese. Would I be right in thinking Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands never visited the Hatfield Galleria?

(Editor's note: The correct answer is actually Frank Bough, but I think that's right about Queen Beatrix!)

Does anyone ever ask you about why the show is set in Berkhamsted?

Frequently. We chose a place from which it could either be very easy or very hard for Ed to get to London. Sometimes it's useful for him to be at his agent's office in under an hour and other times it's more helpful to the story if he has to walk through the night along the canal towpath.

Is it true that there may be a TV version of Ed Reardon?

I doubt it. The show attacks, among other things, the greed and heartlessness that characterise so much of the media. Unfortunately these are the values that television executives hold most dear. But we're currently writing the seventh radio series so there are still plenty of opportunities for Ed to rant about the sheer asininity of the twelve year-olds.

Would you spend an evening in the pub with Ed Reardon?

I'd be worried about him thinking I was boring and lightweight. And it would of course be quite an expensive evening. **JB**

Coming soon: Interview with Ed Reardon co-writer Andrew Nickolds.

The Sunnyside of life

Sunnyside Rural Trust describes its work to **Cathy Edmunds** and invites Berkhamsted residents to get involved

Sunnyside Rural Trust is a local charity, and in 2010 celebrates its 20th anniversary. The Trust exists to provide day, employment and training for adults with learning disabilities. We provide a valuable and popular service which aims to develop the skills of over 70 service users each week. Our service users come from a wide range of backgrounds and from across the Dacorum and Three Rivers areas.

Sunnyside Rural Trust specialises in teaching employment skills through horticulture, craftwork and woodwork. We also provide training in a range of land-based activities with particular emphasis on organic gardening, horticulture, conservation, and animal care. The service is tailored to meet the needs of each individual, and training is provided to recognised national standards by supportive and creative staff in a secure and safe environment. We want to encourage independence and create employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Over the past 20 years we have developed derelict land to create a number of vegetable plots, a soft fruit orchard, an apple orchard, heritage orchard, mixed native hedgerows, an area of hazel, ash and birch coppice, and a mixed willow species coppice. In addition, we have a sensitively managed conservation site to promote wildlife diversity, notably for reptiles and butterflies.

In 1995, the Trust constructed and opened

a purpose built activity centre at Sunnyside . The centre offers IT equipment for people to undertake research and develop their skills: willow based craft, making jams and chutneys from our soft fruit orchard produce and vegetable allotments, wood work and horticultural activities.

Our Northchurch site focuses more on fruit and vegetable production and our 240 free range hens. We grow a wide range of vegetables, herbs, plants, fruits and bedding plants. We have developed a positive reputation for the quality of our produce including our varieties of tomatoes (which are delicious), apple juice and fresh eggs.

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The hens are very happy chickens and the majority are ex-battery hens. They have plenty of shelter, water and organic food to produce fantastic eggs.

We welcome volunteers and community support to help with tasks throughout the site. We use the fruit, vegetables and herbs we grow to create healthy, wholesome meals for service users. Surplus produce is sold via our farm shop and market stall as part of our social enterprise. **JB**

Please visit our website at www.sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk and come and see our farm shop at our Northchurch site, Northchurch allotments off New Road.

Walsingham Prayer Group by Fr Michael Bowie

A new prayer group is being formed at St Peter's as part of the wider network of prayer associated with the Anglican shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk. Walsingham housed a large priory of monks and a shrine from the 11th century, a major focus of pilgrimage from England and beyond, rivalling the popularity of Canterbury. The shrine focused on devotion to Mary because the founder had a vision of the mother of Jesus. Henry VIII ordered the monastery to be looted and the shrine destroyed in 1538 as part of his Reformation, but in 1922 the Vicar of Walsingham decided to undertake the restoration of the Shrine and pilgrimages began again, increasing in popularity every year.

Within the Shrine Church is the 'Holy House' a recreation of the house in Nazareth where Mary received the news from the angel Gabriel that she was to be the mother of Jesus. Within the Holy House, above the altar, is the niche where the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham sits surrounded by candles and votive lights. This statue of Mary is much-loved and it is important to understand that it is simply a focus for devotion - a visual aid - and not something to be worshipped in itself. Christians have always sought the prayers of Mary to support us in our pilgrimage through life. At times in the history of the church there has been controversy about devotion to Mary but



Walsingham— a major focus of pilgrimage from England and beyond, rivalling the popularity of Canterbury

in these ecumenical days few would deny a right respect and love to the Mother of Jesus. Since 1931, Shrine Prayers - a short service during which pilgrims intercession requests are read out has taken place every evening in the shrine church. Many pilgrims and visitors attend to say their own prayers and many join the worldwide Society of Our Lady of Walsingham to participate in prayer from their homes and churches in the United Kingdom and throughout the world. These prayers are offered for the

needs of all God's people and support the shrine in its daily life, centred on prayer and the Holy Eucharist.

Members of St Peter's have been pilgrims to Walsingham for about the last 10 years and some of us have now started a local group, or 'cell', which encourages us in our prayer life and is devoted to prayer of intercession – especially for the many people who leave requests for prayer on our prayer board in church (this will soon be possible on our renewed website as well). For more information about the prayer group please contact Rector Michael Bowie or Fr John Pritchard.

The Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham will be in Berkhamsted on Friday 4th March next year on the way to a day of Walsingham devotions in St Albans Abbey. There will be an ecumenical service of prayer that evening and also a youth event – more details in future issues of *Your Berkhamsted*. **JB**

Baptisms (St Peter's)

8th August 2010

Oscar Maxwell Markwort, Lola Rose Harman

15th August 2010

Beatrice Catherine Grace Murray

22nd August 2010

Felix George Armond, Molly May Browne, Imogen Chloe Maynard,
Ella-Rose Robertson, Elizabeth Anne Whittle

Baptisms (All Saints')

29th August 2010

Henry Thomas Fearn

Funerals (St Peter's)

1st September 2010

David Vulliamy Lidderdale

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 3rd Mon | Pastoral Network, 7:45pm, The Court House. Contact Philippa Seldon 871534 |
| Tue | Chuckles Parent & Toddler Group, 10-11:30am. All Saints Church Hall. Song Time or short service as announced. Contact Jenny Wells, 870981 |
| Tue | St Peter's Choir, Children 5:15-6:15pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859 |
| 1st Tue | Tuesday Club, 7:45pm A lively women's group with guest speaker. The Court House. Contact Barbara McKenna 871159 |
| 3rd Tue | Mothers' Union, meet in members' houses at 8pm. New members always welcome. Contact Kathie Lally, 863526 |
| 4th Tue | Mothers' Union Prayer Group, 2:30pm. 17 Shaftesbury Court. Tell us if anyone needs your prayers. Contact Jenny Wells 870981 |
| Wed | Julian Meeting, meets about twice a month. 11:30am. All welcome. At Jenny Wells, 57 Meadow Rd, 870981 or at Ruth Treves Brown, 1 Montague Rd, 863268 |
| Wed | Pathfinders Club, 7-8:30pm. The Court House, Yrs 5-8. Penny Nash 865217 |
| Thu | Home Group, 8pm on 2nd and 4th Thurs. |
| Thu | Bellringing, 8pm, St Peters. Contact Helen Ruberry, 890949 |
| Fri | Little Fishes Parent & Toddler Group 9:30-11:30am. The Court House. Weekly, with short service on 1st Friday in St Peter's (10am). Tracy Robinson 863559 |
| Fri | St Peter's Choir, Children 7-8:30pm, Adults 7:30—8:30pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859 |
| 3rd Sat | ABC Prayer Breakfast, 8am for breakfast & prayers. Various local churches. |

October Parish Diary

Fri 1 st , 10:00am	Little Fishes Service, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 3 rd , 9:30am	Harvest Festival Sung Eucharist, <i>St Peter's</i> followed by Parish Harvest Lunch, <i>The Court House</i>
Tue 5 th , 10:15am	Chuckles Toddlers' service Harvest , <i>All Saints'</i>
Fri 8 th , 1:00pm	The Cowper Society presents The Rainbow Ensemble [6 players], <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 10 th , 6:00pm	Choral Evensong, <i>St Peter's</i>
Tue 12 th , 8:00pm	Parochial Church Council, <i>The Court House</i>
Sat 16 th , 8:00am	Association of Berkhamsted Churches Prayer Breakfast, <i>Sunnyside Church</i>
Sat 16 th , 11:00am	Berkhamsted Arts Festival: The Cowper Society presents Come and Sing , Berkhamsted Choral Society, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sat 16 th , 7:00pm	Visiting Bellringers (9:00pm), <i>Belltower, St Peter's</i>
Sun 17 th , 7:30pm	Berkhamsted Arts Festival: The Cowper Society presents The Bridgewater Sinfonia with Leon Bosch , <i>St Peter's</i>
Tue 19 th , 10:15am	Chuckles Toddlers' service Daniel and the Lions , <i>All Saints'</i>
Sun 24 th , 7:30pm	Berkhamsted Arts Festival: The Cowper Society presents Wartime Poets , a Poetry Reading, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sat 30 th , 7:30pm	The Cowper Society presents: The Gaudeamus Singers , <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 31 st , 3:00pm	Fr John Russell to be licensed as Team Vicar by †Paul Bayes, Bp of Hertford (Bp from 21 st September), <i>Little Gaddesden</i>

Sunday Services	St Peter's		All Saints—October	
	8:00am	Eucharist	2 nd	10:00am Holy Communion
	9:30am	Sung Eucharist & Sunday School	9 th	8:00am Holy Communion
	6:00pm	Evensong		10:00am Morning Worship
			16 th	10:00am Sung Eucharist
			23 rd	10:00am Morning Worship
		<i>First Sunday in month Family Service at 9:30am</i>	30 th	10:00am Holy Communion

Internationally Supported Mothers Union by Margaret Burbidge

The issues are the same; the context is different. In Australia the issues facing the Mothers' Union in providing *Christian Care for Families* are similar to those here. St Albans diocese MU has links with two Australian dioceses, Grafton and Armidale in the north-east corner of New South Wales.

The problems of family life are not unduly different from those in this country. The elderly and sick, the homeless and families with young children need help and support, not made easy by living in remote, rural communities, and MU project work is similar to our own.

Parenting courses, and hospital projects supplying garments for neonatal units and emergency toilet bags for patients, are all part of MU outreach. They have experienced bushfires, floods and drought in recent years and families struggle emotionally and financially with the effects of natural disasters. Beyond their home dioceses members support MU projects in the Province of Australia, like the development of leadership skills for Aboriginal women in the Northern Territories and the settlement of refugees from Africa and the Middle East into the



Southern States. Belonging to a worldwide organisation means members are conscious of the needs of the wider world and raise money for work overseas. The “official” links with Grafton and Armidale bring personal contacts, and I was privileged to meet their Presidents when they came to the UK in 1998 for a worldwide conference. Attending a Eucharist that summer in York Minster, with them and 3,000 others, confirmed my belief in the Mothers' Union as an international organisation. The members in Armidale and Grafton, like us, are committed to doing all they can in their own ways to make a better world for families.

For more information on the work of the Mothers' Union, see their website:

www.themothersunion.org

Key Church Contacts

Parish Office, Hilary Armstrong and Kate Perera, Court House, 878227.
Fr Michael Bowie, 864194 (day off Fri). Team Rector, St Peter's.
Fr John Pritchard, 870016 (day off Thurs). Asst Curate, St Peter's.
The Revd Caroline Weaver, 866324 (day off Fri). Methodist Minister, All Saints.

Further information available from our church websites:

www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk and at www.allsaintsberkhamsted.org.uk

Little Spirit

'...everyone's mission to others begins at home with the self.'

Chapter One: An Unusual Fog by PJ Marvell

The old iron key simply would not turn. The Curate twisted it, coaxed it, jiggled and poked it and finally wrenched it, but it remained stiff, determinedly unlocked. The church bell chimed, six already. The Curate stood up straight and looked to the darkening sky.

'It seems the Lord doesn't want his church closed tonight,' he muttered. He stared at the key and wondered to himself for a moment. 'Oil,' he said thoughtfully, 'or maybe butter!' He knew instantly which one he had at home, and hurried the few steps across the cobbles to his house, worrying about leaving the church unlocked and wondering where on earth he had left the butter dish!

At the very moment he shut his front door, a fog descended, a very unusual fog, which fell in just about the blink of an eye. The Curate hadn't noticed its swift arrival as he searched with increasing panic for the butter, but the driver of the Number 62 bus to Hemel Hempstead certainly had, and drove straight off Bridgewater Road narrowly missing a lamp post.

'Wretched fog!' spluttered the driver as he reversed back onto the road. He squinted through his glasses at the thick mist curling and twining through the lights of the bus. He shivered, he hated the fog, brought the ghosts out! At least the bus was empty and he wouldn't have to stop... or so he thought.

In the corner seat of the very back row, a little boy rested, curled up like a cat. His name was Little Spirit. He was as thin as a shadow and his hair as dark as the earth. He wore ragged clothes and carried nothing. Not a thing. Not even a little rucksack, or an apple for emergencies, not even a picture of his family, despite being a very long way from home. He had travelled and travelled and become weak, and knew he needed rest. Although he loved the bus, the rumbling of the engine and the warm seat at the back, at night the cold inside the bus seeped into his bones. It was time to get off.

Little Spirit reached up a spidery finger and pushed the "Stop" button. The driver wrenched his head round and drove off the road for the second time that night.

' 'Ose there?' he yelled, reversing the bus onto the road again, while Little Spirit slithered under the seats and hid next to the back doors.

'E-L-L-O!' boomed the driver, feeling queasy. There! The fog had brought out the ghosts, and they were on his bus! At the next stop he slammed on the brakes, if there was a ghost he'd prefer it got off!

'SHOW ye-self!' he bellowed, his voice quivering, and opened the back doors. He daredn't peer behind him, but eventually he risked a peek in his rear view mirror. He blinked. He saw nothing but empty seats.

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Little Spirit watched from inside a thick hedge as the bus rumbled past. It was dark now and in the swirl and the twist of the fog he could easily move without being seen. He needed a place to stay overnight, food could wait until morning, so he swiftly headed off through a narrow bridge. On the other side, through the small breaks in the furling fog, Little Spirit weaved and twisted his way up a long road, lined with houses. He met no-one, but from time to time he thought he heard footsteps, and hid in the shadows. Little Spirit felt as if he were being followed.

Shivering badly, he came upon an old wooden door with a large iron key sticking out of the lock. He reached out and with shaking hands turned the key. It wouldn't budge, it must be locked. Suddenly, he heard it, the faint tap of footsteps. He had to get inside. Taking hold of the key again, Little Spirit wrenched as hard as his tiny body would allow. The footsteps were getting closer and closer. In desperation he leant on the door - it flew open, it had been unlocked all along! Little Spirit tumbled into the darkness as the door slammed behind him. Up ahead he could just make out a wooden bench and he slid beneath it, joining the resting shadows on the icy stone floor.

The Curate reached the church door just as the fog lifted. It swirled away as it came, in just about the blink of an eye.

'Astonishing!' he said, as the fog disintegrated. With slippery fingers the Curate grabbed the old key and pushed a wedge of butter into the lock. He had

finally located the butter dish, but only because he had opened his back door and stepped on it. He liked to sit, drink tea and think before morning prayers and today he had taken toast and butter along too.

'There'll be no more nonsense from you!' he muttered, bracing himself.

'One, two, three!' he bellowed and the key turned. 'Gotcha!' he said triumphantly.

Inside the church of St. Peter, Little Spirit let out a sigh. He hadn't been discovered, and although he wasn't sure where he was, for some inexplicable reason, he felt protected. In the dim moonlight, Little Spirit tiptoed across the stone floor where he found a pile of cushions. He made himself a nest, pulled an old curtain across him and closed his eyes. The boy called Little Spirit finally slept.

Outside the church standing in the shadows of the adjacent Court House, a man watched. He had seen the boy, the Curate and the butter, and all the comings and goings of the night. The fog had hidden more than one person. The fog was his friend, it had done just as he had asked, and so would the boy. The boy would do whatever he asked, whether he liked it... or not.

To be continued...

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Read Chapter Two of Little Spirit in November's issue of *Your Berkhamsted*



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Have your say

Station car park: the debate continues

As one who is not personally affected by the construction of a second tier on the station car park I should like to comment on the article in its defence by our Mayor Julie Laws. I say not personally affected, in the sense of physical impact, but it distresses me to have such an ugly and clumsy structure built that makes no concessions to our Victorian station building, to say nothing of the harmful consequences for some properties in Bridgewater Road.

The Town Council's belief that the extension of the car park will assist with the parking problems in this town is predicated on two assumptions; the first that the charges for parking will be reduced, the second that more restrictions on parking will be imposed on roads leading off Bridgewater Road and elsewhere. The second is quite possible and only depends on the County Council getting round to carrying it out. When this has been done it will certainly benefit many householders currently plagued by all day parking outside their homes.

It is, however, naive for the Council to expect any significant reduction in the charges for the station car park. This matter has been discussed for years with the operators without any progress being made. Furthermore, to be any real use the charges have to be reduced to around half the present amount and, if the car park is to be used by others than commuters, there would need to be even lower charges for short stays. No chance!



Thus, if the new parking restrictions are imposed, some commuters will be forced to park at the station but many others will just park further afield. Few people who have business in the town centre use the station car park now and, even with lower charges in the future, they are unlikely to be willing to walk so far to park, particularly if they have shopping to carry back, for example.

An afterthought. I hope London Midland will have someone standing by the ramp at all times when weather conditions need it. Perhaps it hasn't heard of freezing rain or freeze-thaw and mistakenly hopes that open mesh flooring will avoid there being problems when these conditions occur.

Christopher Morris

Please send your letters to the Editor at editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk or post them to *Your Berkhamsted*, Parish Office, The Court House, Berkhamsted HP4 2AX

Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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What is Transition Town Berkhamsted?

Danny Bonnett gives us an introduction to Transition Town Berkhamsted and the work it is involved in

Transition Town Berkhamsted is a group of residents nudging our town towards a more vibrant and sustainable future. We are driven by two main issues - a care for the environment, and a desire to avoid the worst of the pain as society moves towards a low-carbon future (in lay-man's terms, the economic hardship as the oil runs out). However, there is so much more to 'transition' than just that - the idea is that as we change our society to be more eco-friendly and less oil-dependent, we have the opportunity to re-think the way we do things; to make our social networks stronger, to halt urban decay and start moving in the opposite direction.

Clearly this transformation is not going to happen overnight. But the national/global transition is not a quick one even if the politicians are now talking the right talk. This is where transition communities come in. There are now hundreds of communities across the globe (see www.transitiontowns.org), and all of them are pulling in the same direction. One of the key mantras is to try to change those things near to you, at home, and in your community, that you should have the ability to influence. In this vein, taking more control at a local level is one approach to becoming sustainable that fits well with the 'Big Society' idea currently in vogue. Another key principle of transition is developing resilience in our communities.

For example, a local food chain (production through to sale) gives us



another option in the event of a future fuel crisis which could paralyse the supermarkets within days. So food is one of the areas that we are active in. Energy and transport are obvious areas where we have much to do, but some of the solutions are pretty easy.

Energy

Minimising energy use is appealing not only because it reduces environmental impact, but because it also helps people to save money - and as energy prices continue to rise over the medium term, using energy more efficiently will help

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people to save more and more money. The focus of our work in Berkhamsted so far has been on helping people to achieve these twin benefits of financial and environmental savings. So far we have organised a series of home energy audits where energy experts come and assess the steps that individual homeowners can take and quantify the financial and CO2 savings that would ensue.

We've also organised talks on energy efficiency and have purchased several home energy monitors which we loan out to people in the town who are interested in monitoring and reducing their energy consumption. Since April 2010, we have also been actively promoting the Government's new 'Feed-in-tariff' (FIT) for micro-generation of renewable electricity. This is a government scheme to subsidise the installation of renewable electricity generation on buildings around the town and delivers good financial and environmental returns. We also have plans to work with the business community in the town to maximise energy efficiency and renewable generation and are keen to welcome additional members to maximise our impact.

Transport and Car Free Day

The transport group is active in many areas; promoting cycling with the TBCC (Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign); developing the town's urban plan in conjunction with the town council; supporting the campaign for a sustainable transport plan for the railway; and running the first ever car-free day (CFD) in June 2010. A good question to all of you is whether you knew that we had a CFD this

year? As for any community group, we have constraints on our resources, both time and money, so we had to decide on our areas of priority. We concentrated on the school run, and tried to engage with the town's schools and see what we could do together. Some schools enthusiastically took this on. Berkhamsted School opened its sports grounds on the northern and southern fringes of the town for parents to drop off kids so they could walk into the school. This was a great idea, and seemed to have a big impact. The local state schools have narrower catchment (so fewer cars), but they still enthusiastically asked pupils/parents to lift-share, to consider public transport, to walk or cycle. Waitrose have offered to get their cycle-delivery people to come to the town if we do the same next year. Imagine this: you walk to the shop, buy as much as you'd like, safe in the knowledge that someone else's legs will cycle the strain on the way home - genius! We took some amazing photos of the High Street at 3.30pm that day - spookily empty. Thank you residents, schools, pupils, parents and businesses for showing what a change we can make. Next year we'll focus more on businesses, and try to spread the awareness of the impacts (positive and negative) that our personal choices make.

JB

If you'd like to find out more about TTB, find us on the web at:
www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk

Contact Danny Bonnett on 07795 236402 if you would like to join our Transition Town Berkhamsted community and maybe initiate some activities yourself.

My Kingdom for a...jam jar?

Jam makers in Swaziland and the writer have one problem in common; an acute shortage of suitable jam jars. This shortage affects Eswatini Kitchen, a fair trading company in Swaziland, to a far greater extent than me, for in southern Africa, there is only one factory making suitable glass jars. I, on the other hand, can rely on my WI and friends and neighbours for jars. Earlier this year a lack of jars caused a bottleneck in supplies of preserves for Eswatini which led to delayed orders and lost sales.

Now please, do not consider recycling your jars to Swaziland, but do buy their delicious produce which is imported by Just Trading Scotland and sold locally on Fairtrade stalls. Look for a medium hot curry sauce and delicious lime marmalade, both quite widely available just now.

The fruit for the jams, chutneys and sauces is grown in Swaziland and then cooked and packed locally. At present tomatoes and some berried fruit are in short supply following a particularly harsh winter; remember the shivering fans watching the World Cup? However, we hope for news of more chutneys and jams in the coming months.

Eswatini Kitchen was set up in 1991 to create employment for disadvantaged women and provide a market for local farmers. With the initial support of Oxfam and Fairtrade companies it has grown from a small cottage industry, where five women covered the entire production process in a one room kitchen, to a

thriving business giving more than 300 people a fair and sustainable income. All profits go to the Manzini Youth Care initiative which supports more than 2000 marginalised children in Swaziland.

So go on, look for fair trade products from a tiny kingdom in the south east of a vast continent and let your imagination tell you what a massive difference your support can make to the children of Swaziland. Please donate your jam jars to Angela (not Oxfam for Swaziland), at the Fairtrade stall at the Arts and Crafts Market on 1st Saturday of each month.

All Saints Open Day

In October 2009 All Saints Church in Shrublands Road held an Open Day for neighbours and friends. The initiative was triggered by a remark heard at a funeral when someone said that, despite living all their life in the area, they had never entered the building before.

A well-attended day, enjoyed by the local community and members of the congregation, has prompted a repeat on Sunday 31st October this year.

After Morning Worship at 10am the church will remain open, offering light lunches and tea and cake in the afternoon. The day will conclude with Songs of Praise at 4pm.

The local area will be leafleted with invitations and all are welcome. It may be the day to turn the clocks back but the congregation at All Saints hopes this will be a move forward, leading to closer links with the local community.

Memorial Service

There is a special Memorial Service for those who have been bereaved at All Saints on Sunday 17th October at 4pm.

Oxfam Unwrapped

In the summer of 2004, two other experienced shop volunteers and I sat round a table in Oxfam House with senior managers in the Trading Division and let out a collective Aaah and nods when the idea of selling Oxfam's Alternative Gifts through the chain of Oxfam shops was put forward. It was probably my most significant contribution to the charity in 46 years of volunteering as Oxfam Unwrapped sales have now raised an impressive £16 million pounds.

We were all clear that shops needed something tangible to offer and so the gift cards were born. The new range will launch this month and for the first time there will be an attractively priced gift which is exclusive to the shops on the High St. Books at £8 can only be purchased in store.

The full range is available online but most items will be available through the Berkhamsted shop. They will be on display in a special stand but there are also some high value items such as a classroom or library available only on request. A local school raised enough money to build and equip a classroom for a needy community in Africa. And another awarded Unwrapped gifts as prizes.

The goat has always been the runaway success story and if anyone purchases a goat, a goat there will be. Oxfam is strict in allocating funds to the specific gift purchased. But this year there will be the option to waive that limitation and give the charity the discretion to use the money where there is greatest need. But only if that is the purchaser's wish.

Oxfam Unwrapped gifts make a great choice for a really meaningful present.

Audrey Hope

Karunashraya Hospice in India

I will shortly be going out to the Karunashraya Hospice in India. The purpose of this visit is to do some voluntary work as well as taking out the hospice's share of the money raised at our Petertide Fair. Last time I went they were very pleased with a bag of unused dressings that I took and I would like to be able to do the same again.

Any out of date/unused dressings of all types are welcome. As from the beginning of October, anyone who has such may bring them to St. Peter's Church where they can be put into a box, clearly marked, at the back of the church. This box will be emptied regularly throughout the month. Every item of gauze, cotton wool, bandages and padding are very important and in short supply at all times. Some of the wounds are so horrific that not even the padding can be used a second time.

Elizabeth Jackson

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Your Berkhamsted Contacts

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Copy Dates: 5 November 3 December 3 January

Can we be trusted?

Building our “big society” will I suspect be a major theme in the life of this Government and on the agenda of our country for many years to come. Rowan Williams recently offered a New Testament perspective on this idea, “the great new thing, in the New Testament, is the notion that the kind of human society that God is interested in, the kind of human society that God wants to see flourishing and spreading across the globe, is one in which people have a keen, active sense of their dependence upon each other, the sense, the all consuming sense that everyone has something to give into the common life, the sense that if someone is prevented from giving, then everyone is poor, everyone is frustrated. It’s the theme that the frustration, the poverty of any individual is everyone’s issue.”

So as income and revenue are less guaranteed, as economic cuts take hold within our welfare state, you and I, are being asked to re-engage with a good and almost nearly forgotten idea for society where everyone has something to contribute to our local community and thereby to our global life.

However, “power and opportunity” for the citizens seem to be the motivation of this new Government idea; power and opportunity rather than mutual sympathy, empathy and a genuine understanding of interdependence. I often wonder if it is more the case that when we are known, or at least feel known, in a community, then

we contribute most significantly to local life and in turn witness by our own contribution both to its goodness and our diversity. In this, we are known and valued for who we are, not just because we contribute...

So, in the “big society” there are big unanswered questions. Who will hold the vision for a community? What will the role of Government be? Who wants to join in? Can we opt out? What authority are we really being allowed? What about those who because of their physical or mental health are inhibited from being able to contribute at all?

Essentially, I wonder if we can we be trusted to seek what is ultimately good and right for the majority and act as a group rather than as individuals. Why is it that a natural engagement with our locality and the needs and wellbeing of others is rarely reflected in our nature? It seems that the attention to our selfish desires and needs tends to rule our hearts and minds. How then can we break free of our natural and often selfish inclination?

I wonder, can we be trusted to be part of a “big society” or is it good that we adopt the “big society” idea for our little community? **JB**

Would you like to contribute your thoughts on a political or ethical issue for this page? If so, please contact the editor at editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk or on 862628

