

the magazine for town and parish



your
Berkhamsted

Bletchley Park veterans - in their own words
My Berkhamsted with local author Rowan Coleman
From chorister to cadet - one young man's story
Share your memories of Berkhamsted

November 2010

50p

From the Editor November 2010



*The Parish Magazine of
St Peter's
Great Berkhamsted*

This month's *Your Berkhamsted* has remembrance as its theme. At this time of year we pause to remember and thank the men and women of past and present who fight for our freedoms, but we also think of all the people around the world affected by war in the here and now.

I recently had the privilege to talk to some veterans of Bletchley Park, and you can read their words in the first of a two part feature. Fr John Pritchard has spoken to a young resident of Berkhamsted who as well as being Head Chorister of St Peter's is an Air Training Corp Cadet. We also hear of the work done to support Aids orphans in South Africa. Bestselling local author Rowan Coleman tells us about her Berkhamsted, and Bruce Nixon looks at how we can make our world a better place.

The editorial team would like to say thank you for all the comments and support we have received as we settle into our new roles.

Ian Skillicorn, Editor

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Cover photo: "Poppies in the Fields" by Luis Costa. View more local images at www.luiscostaphotography.com.

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Your Berkhamsted by Fr John Pritchard



Almost daily at St Peter's we remember the illustrious ancestors of our faith, I hope, without embarrassing them!

Amongst them, St Martin of Tours, Bishop, is remembered on the 11th November as this nation remembers the casualties of war and the Unknown Soldier. We give thanks as much for the courage of those soldiers who continue to rage against evil in such unbelievable circumstances in our world as we do for the saints who faithfully sought and continue to live out and proclaim the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus.

November is a month of remembering, so through the services which celebrate All Saints, All Souls and Armistice Day, we remember. Occasionally in recalling the past, we allow our remembering to be dominated by the trauma of our human spite and allow the despicable moments of our human history and all that is "bad" to define us. Yet we have been created to be better than this, for we are capable of a higher and more purposeful love towards one and other which challenges our sometimes destructive and selfish traits.

As I write this leader, members of the congregation of St Peter's are joined with members of the congregation of St Michael and All Angels Church, Sunnyside, in an Alpha course modelled by Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. This is a new venture between these two churches; allies in the Christian Gospel. To me a striking feature of this polished

presentation of the New Testament is an almost obsessive bent on the Crucifixion of Christ rather than on God's undeniable power in the Resurrection. The Cross is essentially part of the story of our human interaction with God, but God redeems that part of our history. Even though we remember the barbaric and horrific manner of our Lord's death, how much greater is it that we recall Jesus' rising from the dead; the triumph, not the misery, the possibility of change, not the old habits!

The Resurrection is our "hope" in the undeniable power of God, which is a love that lives lively rather than simply dwells dimly on past horrors; which forgives rather than perpetuates old grudges between individuals, communities and nations. But then, it is sometimes easier to relate to the mire and the drudgery of human activity than it is to entertain the possibility of the miraculous acts of God which surpass our understanding, even when they are revealed to us in his creation.

So in the midst of remembering the fallen and those still engaged in war, please remember Martin of Tours, Bishop. Born in Pannonia of pagan parents about the year 316. He received baptism, gave up his career as a soldier and founded a monastery in Liguge in France where he lived the religious life under the guidance of St Hilary. Then he was ordained priest and later chosen Bishop of Tours. "Google" him, and as we remember the saints in our generation, let us also remember those who were saints to

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Bletchley Park veterans: in their own words

Ian Skillicorn talks to two Bletchley Park veterans about their experiences in the first of a two part feature

Harry Thompson

How did you come to work at Bletchley Park?

It was October 1942 and I was a student at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. A notice went up on the school noticeboard saying mathematicians and linguists were wanted for special duties in England. I went for an interview and the interviewer asked me how my languages were. I told him I knew French and then he asked "What about German?" I said I didn't know it and he replied "Well, could you learn it in six weeks?" Within a week, two classmates and I had signed up and were on our way to Bedford for training. When I got there I did two hours study every day and a fluent German speaker, who had been a foreign ambassador, checked every exercise I did. After six weeks I did an exam and qualified as a military translator.

How long did your training last?

We got to Bedford in the November and were at Bletchley Park by the following January.

Did local people ask you what you were doing at Bletchley Park?

Well, there could be absolutely no talk about what you did. Even my mum and dad weren't told what I was doing. We had to sign the Official Secrets Act, secrecy was absolutely drummed into us. After I had left Intelligence and was based in Canterbury an officer from Intelligence came down and one night we were having



a drink and he started asking me "What were you doing before you came down here?" I told him I couldn't say anything about what I had been doing and afterwards he told me he'd been sent down there to see if I would tell people. They were checking up on me!

So you passed the test!

Oh yes, I did! It was really hammered into us that what we were doing was top secret.

How long was it before you could tell your family what you did?

I think it was about twelve years after the war. It was a great thing when I read in the paper that we were allowed to do it.

Were they surprised?

I don't know, I suppose they must have been. They knew I must have been doing something funny!

What did you do after the war?

When the war finished I was out in the Far East. I joined the Burma police. On leave one time my father died and so I decided

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not to go back. I then had a career in medicine. There were far too many doctors in Ireland already so I moved to Warrington in 1954.

Have you been back to Bletchley since?

No, I have never been back. I do hope to go soon if I am well enough.

June Douglas

Why did you go to Bletchley Park?

I was sent there! I was in Intelligence in the Air Force, a Section Officer. I went in 1940 and stayed until the end of the war.

What did you do there?

I translated documents from German into English. It was all top secret and you couldn't say a word about what you did. I got married while I was working at Bletchley, but I couldn't tell my husband what I was doing. He was in the army and he understood that you didn't speak about your job.

What are your memories of working there?

Bletchley Park was full of very clever people. My biggest memory is of Josh Cooper (a cryptographer). He was

walking round and round the pond outside the mansion, then he stopped and absent-mindedly looked at the coffee cup and saucer he was holding. You could almost hear him say to himself "What shall I do with this?" and then he chucked it into the pond! By the end of the war I gather the pond was full of cups and saucers that all these clever professors had chucked in!

Where did you live while you worked at Bletchley Park?

Before I was married I lived with four other WAAF officers in a lovely rented house in a village near Leighton Buzzard. The owners were away at the war; the man was at the Front and his wife was a nurse. We were picked up in taxis every day and taken to Bletchley Park and then we were brought back again in the evening. You could be on different shifts, people worked right through the night. I hated working the nights!

Did you talk to your colleagues about your work, or did you have to be careful even among each other?

We were really quite glad not to think about the job when we were off duty! We went dancing, or we went to the cinema.

What do you think about the fact that Bletchley Park is now a museum?

It's good that people can visit it as a museum. It was all years ago, what does it matter now? It's all done and finished with. By the time we were allowed to talk about it I had had three sons and I was far busier thinking about my family!

Did you keep in touch with colleagues?

Yes. You make a lot of good friends in a place like that. JB

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Giving a hand up, not a handout

Marilyn Pain describes the support given to Aids orphans in South Africa



Phakamisa is a registered charity in the UK that raises money to support Aids orphans in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa in a place called Pinetown outside Durban. It is a ministry of the Pinetown Methodist Church and it serves impoverished communities through the provision of educational training, resourcing and support.

Phakamisa is pronounced "Pugameesa" and it is a Zulu word which means "to uplift the community". It is a hand up rather than a handout. It seeks to support the very poorest and most vulnerable: the children left behind after the adults have died of Aids and who themselves are battling to survive living with Aids.

15,000 children are reached daily through the Caregiver and Educare programmes. The donation of £1 a month will cover the needs of one child for a month.

There are many personal stories to testify to the great work that has been done in the lives of the children. This is an excerpt from a report written by one of

Phakamisa's wandering teachers, Ntombi (name changed) who teaches children in an informal settlement near Pinetown. A wandering teacher is one who teaches a group of children in a designated place on a set day of the week and then moves to another place the next day to teach a different group of children. Her "school" is in a suitcase that she carries with her.

"Things are not good at all. Ntobeko and Abenathi have lost their mother and that is very painful. They are just so young to be losing their parent (3 and 4 years old). They need their mother. On the other hand, I'm grateful for the fact that, in our culture, it takes a whole village to raise a child. You don't have one mother, but a whole village filled with mothers, even if they cannot offer much, since they don't have much themselves. The love is enough."

This report makes me grateful that we are all in a community - one large global village - and in fact, that global village is taking care of Ntobeko and Abenathi. The children now live with Flomena, a Phakamisa caregiver in that village. She, along with other members of the caregiver group, provides them with the love, Ntombi speaks of. Their clothing comes from the Phakamisa storeroom - brand newly sewn or second-hand - but lovingly provided by our friends near and afar. Their food comes from the vegetable garden where their carer works, under the training and guidance of the Phakamisa monitor, whose salary is sponsored by our faithful generous donors. It also comes

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from a local chain store which generously gives Phakamisa ‘yesterday’s bake’ to distribute to those in need.

The specialised weekly psychomotor lessons, which help the children to express their emotions through their bodies, are also sponsored by our overseas donors and this class takes place on the church premises in Pinetown. Their free education comes from Ntombi, one of our wandering teachers, sponsored by an overseas church. Most of the funds for this project comes from people living in the UK who have heard of the project through their church.

Phakamisa is so grateful that the British public feel the need to play their part in the global village, and so allow the Ntobekos, Abenathis, Flomenas and Ntombis of this world to also have a chance to feel, to live, to grow and to love. There are 4 projects:

Educare teacher training where practical skills are taught to (often illiterate) people looking after the 0-6 age group. They are shown how to stimulate the children and recycle waste products into toys and teaching aids. The children are also given a meal of bread and soup or a peanut butter sandwich at "school" which may be the only meal they have that day. The school may be a designated place under a tree or in a corrugated iron church building or a packing container that has been donated by a company.

Caregivers look after the often child-headed households by providing food and shelter and a caring family life. The orphans, usually not related to them, live with them in their shacks and rondavels.

The orphans seldom have government grants to pay for their food, shelter and schooling. Phakamisa Caregiver Groups support the carers by providing spiritual and emotional support as well as clothes and food parcels. They are also taught vegetable gardening, cooking and sewing to support themselves and the orphans.

Economic Empowerment is enabled by teaching the ladies to sew and use their bead working skills to make beaded jewellery to sell for an income to support the orphans in their care. The ladies are taught to sew bags, skirts and children’s fantasy clothes.

Tholuthando is the HIV+ Aids support group which provides confidential holistic support which celebrates hope while there is still life.

Here in the UK we have a board of twelve Trustees who co-ordinate different areas and raise awareness as well as funds. There are no costs and so all the fundraising goes directly to where it is needed most.

This is a short summary of the huge project that it has become. Please visit our website: www.phakamisauk.org or feel free to contact me, Marilyn Pain (South East Co-ordinator and Trustee), on 01442 877951; I am very happy to do talks, show DVDs of the projects, and I sell the beadwork too.

The Berkhamsted School has kindly sold beaded bracelets at their “civvies day” and I am having a charity table at their Michelmas Fair on 20th November. Don’t forget the Concert at All Saints Church on

From chorister to cadet

Fr John Pritchard talks to Christopher Limbert, Head Chorister at St Peter's and Air Training Corp Cadet

How long have you been our Head Chorister at St Peter's and when did you become a member of the Air Training Corp?

I have been in the choir for many years, but am fortunate to have been Head Chorister for the past four years and see it as a great privilege. I joined the ATC a couple of years ago, just as I turned 13, which is the joining age. I heard about them through a newsletter to Ashlyn's School, went to an open evening and was hooked.

What captured your imagination about being part of the ATC?

It offers something else, something different to my experience of life. It gives me a huge range of opportunities to do things which I wouldn't do otherwise, such as flying planes and shooting, The Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and daytime and night-time manoeuvres or expeditions. It gives me a chance to develop some life skills and makes me think about team work rather than just myself.

What is the ethos of the ATC?

"Venture, Adventure" which means that there is a place for adventure and something different and good in my experience of life. I am in 1113 (Berkhamsted) Squadron with 20 to 30 members, which includes male and female members.



What is the motto of the choir then?

I suppose the Choristers Prayer best sums up the Choir motto "Bless O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple, that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives." Says it all really!

Do you think the ATC encourages "what you believe you might show forth"?

I think so, it helps you understand better who you are. It tries to promote good things in us such as supporting our country, being part of the squadron and a group.

So what they both encourage is you representing something bigger than yourself?

Yes, it's more of a team ethic. A choir is a choir because of its membership

and a squadron is the same because of its corporate and inclusive nature. Though the individual is important, the group really matters.

How do you “marry” the two together? One is a call to arms, the other to God... are their ethics compatible?

Yes and no. Looking smart and being your best are common to both groups. The church might ask that we turn away from war and violence, and the ATC might neglect the importance of Sunday as a Holy Day, but I think they can share a vision.

Does the ATC teach you an ethic of war?

No, they don't say that this is about warfare... Yes, we are being taught to be able to engage in combat, but this is more about team work and life skills.

How does being Head Chorister and a member of the ATC prepare you for your future life?

Being Head Chorister is preparing me for the future as it prepares me for a musical career. The ATC gives me an idea of Armed Forces life... though I think I would like to get a good job helping people in some way, and if I am lucky have a nice family and just live life to the full...

At the end of the day, is it all about uniforms and dressing up?

Well, in some ways the dressing up

can be both good and bad. Certainly it distinguishes you in a way. Uniforms distinguish us yet make us feel included in the activities that we are doing. Though it's not just about nice clothes, it is about the more meaningful side of the activity. If I went to church and wore normal clothes, I would still be part of the church, part of the choir, and that is important.

What are the highlights of your life as a chorister, and in the ATC?

As a chorister, the Venice trip, and in the ATC, it is the first time I went flying...

Is remembering the dead of our wars important?

I think it is important. Without those people who went forward, we might not now have a free country. What they did was so good that we should always have the commemoration of the people.

Will you be wearing a poppy?

Of course.

Love thy neighbour or fight the good fight? Which one?

Both... sometimes you have to stand up and be counted.

If you had children would you send them to the choir or to war?

I would tell them to go and sing a war song and be reminded of our history.

yB

Little Spirit

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

Chapter Two: The Remembering by **PJ Marvell**

The boy called Little Spirit woke with a start. He could hear the familiar sound of a key jangling in a lock. His eyes darted round for a hiding place and took in his vast new home. He had only learnt a few words of English since his arrival, and he knew the name of his hideout - a church.

‘Clunk!’ Little Spirit dived underneath the nearest bench. He could hear footsteps hurrying towards him.

‘Butter?’ said an elderly man, as he rushed by.

‘Clunk!’ another door unlocked.

‘Bit late today,’ boomed the elderly man, as the clatter of more footsteps joined his. ‘Look at this Curate, butter on the key!’

‘Ah! That was me,’ said the Curate. ‘Couldn’t turn the key – butter did the job!’

‘Morning!’ said another voice.

‘Morning Vicar’, said the Curate.

‘Terrible fog last night! I hope it’s clear on Remembrance Sunday - we need to see where to put the wreaths!’

Through a gap in the underside of the

bench, Little Spirit could see two of the men were dressed in black uniforms with white collars. The Vicar and the Curate.

Silence fell. Little Spirit slithered under rows and rows of benches, until he reached the front. He cautiously poked his head out and gasped in wonderment - through the arched windows the morning sunlight swam all around the two men, who sat in quiet thought.

Little Spirit slid back under the bench, the men might not sit there for long, he must find somewhere to hide. The young boy was an expert at concealing himself, it helped being as thin as a shadow, and having hair as dark as the earth. He looked upwards to a large balcony, overlooking the rows of benches. The perfect place to hide! But how to get there?

Little Spirit crept up the side of the church, grabbing the old curtain he’d used as a cover during the night. Crossing the church, he paused halfway, by a large stone bowl filled with water. He couldn’t stop himself, and gulped down as much water as he could. Next he found the door to the balcony and swiftly climbed a small flight of stairs. (*continues on page 19*)

World Aids Day

On Wednesday, December 1st, World AIDS Day, All Saints shall hold our usual Day of Prayer at All Saints' Church for those in our world who live with HIV/AIDS. This year we shall also remember those who suffer from malaria, leprosy and TB.

Everyone is welcome to join us between 9am and 7pm whether for a very short time or for a longer time. There will be information about these diseases and also prayers that you can use and take away.

For more information, contact Ruth Treves Brown (863268).



Opportunity for Part-time Caretaker The PCC of St Peter's, Berkhamsted, is looking for someone to undertake the role of Caretaker for the Court House, starting in mid-November. For more details contact Kate or Hilary in the Parish Office, 01442 878227.

Sundays Together Lunch by Elizabeth Jackson

With a team of helpers, and some input from Donutz, one of St Peter's Youth groups, we serve lunch in the Court House to around 20 to 26 people on the first Sunday of the month.

The lunch, complete with sherry and wine, is intended for anyone who is alone, bereaved or otherwise, on a Sunday and they do not have to be members of St. Peter's church.

We are open to accepting more participants, especially of the male variety! 30 people is the upper limit - if more, then it becomes less intimate, and

just too large for a full scale lunch.

We are always on the look out for more helpers too. There are currently 4 teams of 3 people, so, on average each person helps once every 3

months. There are Sundays when we do have to cancel if there is another event, such as harvest, or if Easter celebrations fall on a Sunday, however this happens rarely and notification is always given in good time.

If you would like to come to a Sunday Together Lunch, or volunteer to help, please contact Elizabeth Jackson, on 864382.



November Parish Diary

Mon 1st, 8:00pm	All Saints' Day Holy Communion, <i>All Saints'</i>
Tue 2nd, 8:00pm	Requiem for All Souls, <i>St Peter's</i>
Fri 5th, 10:00am	Little Fishes Service, <i>St Peter's</i>
Tue 9th, 10:15am	Chuckles Toddlers' service <i>Samuel the Good Listener, All Saints'</i>
Sun 14th, 3:00pm	Royal British Legion Service of Remembrance, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sat 20th, 8:00am	Association of Berkhamsted Churches Prayer Breakfast, <i>All Saints'</i>
Sat 20th, 7:30pm	Cowper Society presents: Bridgewater Sinfonia with Bach, Elgar & Neilsen, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 21st, 6:00pm	St Cecilia Choral Evensong, <i>St Peter's</i>
Tue 23rd, 10:15am	Chuckles Toddlers' service, Jonah and the Whale, <i>All Saints'</i>
Sat 27th, 10-12noon	Friendship Club Coffee Morning, <i>All Saints'</i>
Sat 27th, 2-5pm	Advent Workshop, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 28th, 6:00pm	Advent Carol Service—Candlelit, <i>St Peter's</i>

Advent Travelling Crib

Every year two Mothers' Union Travelling cribs travel around the parish as a reminder of the story of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem that first Christmas.

Once again they will be leaving both St Peters' and All Saints' Churches after the morning service on Advent Sunday (November 28th) to spend each night in a different home until returning to church in time for Christmas.

This is always very popular with families and the lists of those taking part fill up quickly. We will be starting to take names for this on Sunday 7th November. If you are unable to be in church on the 7th and wish to take part then ring Kathy Lally for St Peters 863526 or Jenny Wells for All Saints 870961.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



For more information on the work of the Mothers' Union: www.themothersunion.org

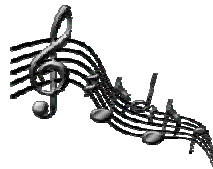
Regular Church Activities

- 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.

News from the Pews ... a light-hearted view by Julian Dawson

It struck me as once again I found myself shifting a dozen pews before breakfast that quite frankly castors were not invented too soon. And were it not for the denizens of the Oak Pew Preservation Society (OPPS) then we might yet have them affixed. With brakes of course. Otherwise we would be witnessed to mass demonstrations of Newton's laws of action and reaction. Indeed this gives rise

to a vision of the mass ranks of the Royal Oak Pews drifting musically. And in synchronisation. Handel's Royal Pew Music. For woodwind naturally.



November Registers

Baptisms

26 September Lily–Beth Davies
26 September Benjamin Peter Horsley
26 September Sebastian William John Mcgrath
26 September Charlotte Connie-Ann Bailey
26 September James Matthew Lewis Bailey
26 September Freddie Edward Lewis Bailey
26 September Ffion Eve Webster

Weddings

10 September Philip James Playle and Julie Emma Duncombe
25 September Neil Eric Fischer and Pauline Theresa Millett

Funerals

1 Sept David Vulliamy Lidderdale
9 Sept Joan Weston Dickman
8 Sept Margaret Jane Baxter
7 Oct Sylvia Mary Grottick

St Peter's

8:00am Eucharist
9:30am Sung Eucharist & Sunday
School
6:00pm Evensong

*First Sunday in month Family Service at
9:30am*

All Saints—November

7th	8:00am	Holy Communion
	10:00am	Morning Worship
14th	10:00am	Morning Worship, (Remembrance)
21st	10:00am	Holy Communion
28th	10:00am	Holy Communion
	4:00pm	Healing Service

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

Shortly, several people arrived for morning prayers. As they left two ladies appeared with cloths and a strange air-sucking contraption which made a terrible noise. At midday, Little Spirit jumped in fright as the church bell rang, which brought in an old lady, splendid in lilac. She sat on the back bench eating sandwiches. Little Spirit's stomach grumbled. The day drifted by and soon the sun faded from the huge glass windows. It was time to find food.

Little Spirit slipped out of the church, and crept across the cobbles, where he found some boxes dumped outside a shop. Peering into one of them, he pulled out a bunch of bananas – his heart skipped – his favourite! He stuffed the bananas under the old curtain, knowing he shouldn't and vowing to repay the shop. The boy devoured three bananas in a row as he walked cautiously down the street.

Outside another shop he found several plastic bags, one of which hung open. Inside, Little Spirit found all he needed: two t-shirts, two jumpers, trousers, a jacket, socks and a pair of battered trainers. He had never owned so many clothes in his entire life! Again he vowed to repay the shop, as he rushed back to the church.

The sinister winds of November soon blew in, bringing with them a sinister visitor, a strange man, with black pointed shoes, who had seen the

arrival of Little Spirit at the church.

The man began to visit the church regularly, and from behind the largest pipe of the organ, Little Spirit would watch him. The man always tried to open the door to the tower and on one occasion when it was ajar, instead of climbing the narrow stone stairs, he simply touched the wall at the bottom of the stairwell. The man worried Little Spirit and reminded him of a bad apple, ripe and shiny on one side but brown and rotten on the other. At least he never visited on Sundays, Little Spirit's favourite day of the week.

He was surprised to find today's service had a different ending - instead of singing, everyone bowed their heads and the Curate led a procession out of the church into, thankfully, a fogless morning. Through the windows of the balcony, Little Spirit watched as rings of red flowers were laid upon a monument covered in names.

'Remember... remember,' was the only word Little Spirit understood as the Curate spoke. He thought of his home on the plains, his mother and father and his tiny sister. Would he ever find his way back? He missed them so much he could barely breathe. It hurt so much to remember, but it hurt so much more to forget. *yB*

To be continued next month

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Rowan Coleman

We hear from the bestselling author, who lives in Berkhamsted

The place in the local area that I like to visit to relax and reflect is...

I love Ashridge woods, near the monument. There is nothing as lovely as a doggy walk on a crisp autumn day, or in the spring with the bluebells. Sometimes if I'm feeling energetic (rare) I go for a run through Ashridge and up to Ivinghoe Beacon.



You'd be surprised to know this about me but...

I have worked as a barmaid in pretty much every pub in the town at one point or another.

My biggest influence is...

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte.

If I could pass any law it would be...

No driving a giant 4x4 unless you are a) a farmer, b) can park it and c) have at least four people to transport.

Berkhamsted is crying out for...

An outdoor swimming pool - my nine year old can't believe that we used to have one and we shut it down!

My favourite place to get a coffee or a bite to eat in or around the town is...

I go to Bel Cafe for coffee most mornings, quite often to write - the bustle helps me think. And I love seafood, so I like to go to Eat Fish when I get a chance.

If I have time to myself I...

Spend half an hour in Muse trying not to buy everything.

When I was a child I wanted to be...

A writer (and Oscar winning actress... there's still time.) *JB*

When I want to indulge myself I go to...

When I need a bit of indulgence I either get my hair done at Gorgeous Hair Salon or have a treatment at Bespoke.

I think the most beautiful sight in Berkhamsted is...

The inside of the Rex cinema, it's just gorgeous. I love Art Deco and I remember going to the cinema when I was a child and seeing it all grubby, smelly and cut right in half to make two screens! The restoration to its former glory is stunning.

I moved to Berkhamsted because...

I grew up in Berkhamsted, and moved back after ten years away because...well, it's home.

If I could change one thing about Berkhamsted, it would be...

Well, if we keep building houses at the current rate we will need another primary school and another middle school to keep up.

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Have your say

Share your memories

I somehow got involved with a Parish Paths Partnership (PPP) project to produce an audio trail using footpaths round the town. The idea was a circular walk starting and finishing at the station – due to everyone coming by train or easy parking!

I was tasked with producing background information to make it interesting. The first task was to get to the station and see if the project was actually feasible by recording a trial commentary for the first section which was to go from the station to Bullbeggars Lane via the canal. I found myself saying 'on the right was the parcel office, now a fish and chip shop; next to that is the Station Masters house, now an office; just beyond that are a block of flats occupying the site of Shaw & Kilburn, who were a leading local car dealer and just beyond that...'. You get the idea, and I hadn't even moved a foot off the station forecourt yet.

Meanwhile, back on the bookshelf lurked 'Reminiscences of Berkhamsted' by H Nash, that finished in 1900. The two books I had by Percy Birtchnell, 'A Short History of Berkhamsted' and 'Bygone Berkhamsted' faded out about 1970. Along the canal things have changed just in my short lifetime (stop it!) but the memories started coming back. The fish and chip shop in Ravens Lane, Coopers and even the tall pines next to Hall Park Garage. At Bullbeggars Lane, the rubbish tip just over the bridge and the stupid wall down the middle of the main road. Up Garden Field Lane into Sugar Lane –

which I've recently been informed was the original name for Garden Field Lane – along Long Green and the small planted area in memory of Ken Harbord. Castle Street is a shadow of its former self, but the holly tree I used to climb in the old churchyard is still there, although the bottom looks a bit bare now. The sunken cottages have gone, the plumbers merchants now apartments and a strange metal 'thing' attached to the 18th century bridge. Even the timber merchants has gone. Now seems a good time to ask how the plans for 'it' ever got passed in the conservation area. It seems the inmates have taken over the asylum in our town.

However, the trail has sparked a lot of questions on recent history as well as some of the 'normal' day to day changes that occurred in the recent past. A lot of memory jogging needs to be done and I'm currently collecting contacts who can throw light on the things I've forgotten. I'm hoping to get organised enough to record modern 'reminiscences' of modern Berkhamsted. If we are not careful, it will be lost forever and the newcomers will be blissfully unaware of how our town used to be. I've already made a start, so why not join in and jog both our memories?

Norman Cutting

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We welcome your letters. Please see page 30 for contact details. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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A better world is possible

Bruce Nixon tells us about his new book and how we all have a role to play in creating a better world

We face the biggest challenge in our history. Climate change is affecting people everywhere, especially in poor countries. We face wholesale destruction of the ecological system on which all life depends. There is growing awareness that globalisation in its present form is not working and is unsustainable.

Climate change is just one symptom of our failure to live in harmony with Mother Earth and all life on it, including each other. There are five issues confronting us, which are inseparably linked:

Climate change – out of control and irreversible;

Peak everything – not just Peak Oil. Fossil fuel, embedded in almost everything we consume, made our extraordinary way of life possible. We'll have to do without it - it's gold;

We are destroying the ecosystem on which all life depends, poisoning the air all creatures breathe, the water of which life is made and the earth;

Poverty and economic injustice;

Violence, war, terrorism and the threat of nuclear annihilation.

The good news is that this crisis is an opportunity that could lead to happier, more fulfilling lives for everyone! I believe we shall all be more at ease in such a world.



Bluebells in Hardings Wood

My new book, 'A better world is possible', is for people who want to make sense of the situation and take strong action.

At the moment we are diverted by the economic crisis, which has been brought about by the greed of a few and the scandal of money being created largely by debt, instead of by national banks. To transform the situation we need to see the system clearly. Patching it up, addressing symptoms, won't work - a radical transformation is needed. Transformation requires a whole system, a holistic approach. It requires new ways of engaging everyone in a great endeavour - think of Apollo's trip to the moon! It's a

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wonderful world full of possibilities.

We need a focus on what creates wellbeing for everyone and the simple things that make for happiness and fulfilment in our lives. It's our choice: collectively, we can create a fairer, sustainable and non-violent world, or not. We can be the change, but we can also demand more of our governments and global institutions, especially as the next UN Climate Change Summit (COP16) in November approaches.

I should like my book to be a useful resource for thousands of people all over the world. It will be published by O-

Books in about six months from now. In the meantime I shall post a free PDF version on my website (www.brucenixon.com) well before COP16 at Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

The debt crisis is overshadowing everything. There is an impasse between the G20 and the poorer nations who have most to lose. We must put even more pressure on our governments and demand processes that properly include the poorer nations.

6.7 billion people have the power to bring

Classic Tales at The Courthouse

Come along to Classic Tales at The Courthouse on Tuesday 23rd November at 7.45pm, for a special evening of live readings of work by classic writers such as Hans Christian Anderson, Charles Dickens, Jerome K Jerome and Oscar Wilde. Enjoy stories read by Keith Drinkel, best known for roles in television gems such as *A Family At War* and *I Didn't Know You Cared*, and Lisa Armytage, who played Dr Beverly Robinson in the heyday of *Neighbours* and has just completed a West End run opposite Joe McGann.

Tickets are £10 (£8 concessions) with 10% of all ticket sales going to The Prostate Cancer Charity. The ticket price includes mulled wine and a mince pie in the interval.

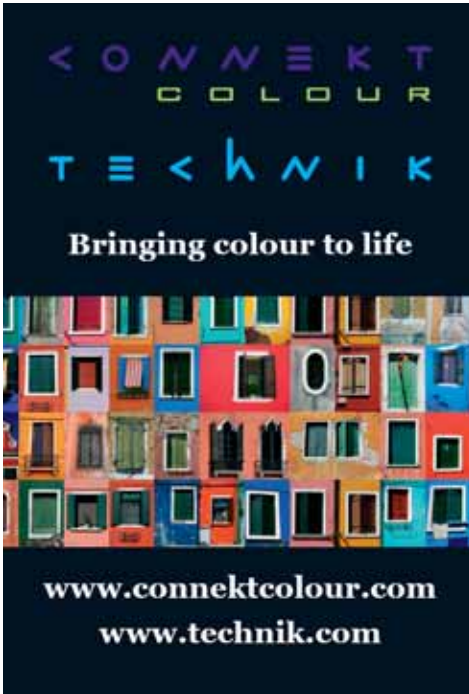
Tickets are available from Cole Flatt & Partners, 124 High Street, Berkhamsted or by calling 862628.

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Art in Cheddington: town farm open studio

A festive show – a warm welcome, mulled wine, mince pies and a display of high quality, handcrafted gifts, Christmas decorations and cards. Meet the artists who will be happy to talk about their work and the processes involved. ONE WEEKEND ONLY: Friday 26 - Sunday 28 November, 10am – 5 pm. Free entry and refreshments. Donations in aid of Iain Rennie Hospice at Home.

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Oxfam and Pizza Express

During November and December Oxfam customers who spend more than £5 in one of the overseas aid charity's shops will receive a receipt entitling them to a £5 discount on any main course at Pizza Express when they apply online for a unique code number.

The popular fast food chain will also donate 25p for every Padana pizza sold and 50p for every Christmas meal. They hope to raise £150,000 for Oxfam Unwrapped, the alternative gifts catalogue, by the New Year.

There is ample scope for getting value for money Christmas gifts and cards at Oxfam. So make your purchases and enjoy a pizza afterwards.

Concert in aid of Phakamisa Trust

A concert in aid of the Phakamisa Trust, a South African Aids charity (see page 9) will be held on Saturday 27th November at 7.30 pm. Tickets £5 at the door.

Berkhamsted Flower Club

The Berkhamsted Flower Club's annual open evening is on Thursday 18th November at the Civic Centre, 7.00pm for 7.30pm. £10 to include mulled wine and shortbread. The demonstration is entitled "Christmas Delight" and the demonstrator is Mrs Gill McGregor.

All the arrangements will be raffled at the end of the evening.

Healing Service at All Saints' Church

A service of healing and wholeness will be held at 4.00 p.m. at All Saints on November 28th Advent Sunday. This will be a quiet, gentle service, with prayers and with the laying on of hands for those who wish for it. We will welcome any who come seeking healing for themselves or others, or those who just need to experience some peace in their lives.

The services will be held on alternate months in future and on the last Sunday of the month.

Remember, Remember the 6th November

Yes, that's the date of this year's town fireworks party organised by the Rotary Club of Berkhamsted Bulbourne. The fun takes place at the cricket club in Castle Hill and includes loads of entertainments, music and refreshments for all the family.

Doors open at 5pm, fireworks start at 6:15pm.

Tickets for the fireworks cost £5 for adults, £3 for children if bought in advance (on sale every Saturday in the market) or £6 and £4 on the night.

Whatever the weather the evening is sure to go with a bang. So come along and be part of this bumper evening of fun.

Full details are at:
www.berkhamstedfireworks.co.uk

Hot foot it or look sharp for the hospice

It's the ultimate test of mind over matter! For the past five years the Hospice of St Francis has challenged the locals to walk barefoot over red hot coals burning at over 800 C! This year there is a sharp new dimension and you can choose to either hotfoot it over the coals or walk over 4 metres of razor sharp smashed glass, the choice is yours!

The event is taking place on Thursday 11th November 2010 at 6pm, Watermill Hotel, Bourne End. It's just £30 to register and participants are asked to raise a minimum of £200 in sponsorship – that's just £10 from 20 friends!

26 year old Simon Redrup of Great Hivings, Chesham works as a security officer in Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire, and has taken part for the past three years. He says: "Once you have done the motivational exercises and got all the crowds around you, the excitement is overwhelming! When you walk across them it does not really register but when you come off the feeling on your feet is something akin to the feeling of a very hot bath, that's all."

To take part or for more information contact Sarah Ajder Tel: 01142 869555 or email: sarah.ajder@stfrancis.org.uk

We welcome your news of community events for these pages. The copy date for December's issue is November 5th. Listings may be edited for reasons of space.

Stir Up Sunday—28th November by Cathy Edmunds

The last Sunday before Advent is traditionally known as Stir Up Sunday. This came about as a result of a line in a prayer that is said on that day, 'Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works'. Traditionally families would attend a church service and then return home to stir the Christmas puddings and cakes mixture together. These acts bring the family together at the beginning of Advent and were thought to help bring luck in the New Year. As the cake and pudding mixture is stirred each family member makes a secret wish as they take turns to stir the mixture.

225g/8oz golden caster sugar
225g/8oz vegetarian suet
340g/12oz sultanas
340g/12oz raisins
225g/8oz currants
110g/4oz candied peel, chopped
110g/4oz plain flour
110g/4oz fresh white breadcrumbs

55g/2oz flaked almonds
1 lemon, zest only
5 eggs, beaten
1 level tsp ground cinnamon
1 level tsp mixed spice
5g/1 level tsp freshly grated nutmeg
pinch of salt
150ml/5fl oz brandy or rum

Preparation method

Lightly grease 4x600ml/1 pint or 2x1.2 litre/2 pint pudding basins. Mix together all the dry ingredients. Stir in the eggs and brandy and mix well. Spoon the mix into basins. Put a circle of baking parchment and foil over the top of each basin and tie securely with string. Make a string handle from one side of the basin to the other so it is easier to pick the basin out of the pan after cooking.

Put the basins in a large steamer of boiling water and cover with a lid. Boil for 5-6 hours, topping the boiling water up from time to time, if necessary. If you do not have a steamer, put the basins in a large pan on inverted saucers on the base. Pour in boiling water to come a third of the way up the sides of the pudding bowls. Cover and steam as before. Cool. Change the baking parchment and foil covers for fresh ones and tie up as before. Store in a cool cupboard until Christmas Day. To serve: steam for 2 hours and serve with brandy butter, rum sauce, cream or homemade custard.

Your Berkhamsted Contacts

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Copy Dates: 3 December 3 January 4 February

“The Just War” by Canon Anthony Lathe

War has always been a tricky subject for Christians. If Jesus' example and teaching is taken literally there can be no place for retribution. If there is punishment to be meted out, it must be left to God. You should forgive and love your enemy. The principle is clear, do not respond to violence with violence.

But thinking not of themselves, Christians have asked, “What should we do?”, when they see others needing to be protected, rescued or freed from violence and evil. So the idea of “The Just War” emerged.

In the earliest days there were definite principles, but these can no longer cope with the modern situation involving the technology of modern weapons, the relationships between nation states, the deciding if a group are terrorists or freedom fighters. So it has been back to the drawing-board.

We begin by acknowledging that aggressive, selfish, violence is wrong. So if force is to be used it should be employed to prevent or avert an even greater evil. In other words the war should stand more than a good chance of leading to a better state of affairs for all. This is a first principle to guide our thinking and judgement about a war.

A second principle is that the action taken should be proportionate. There is a moral curb on an unbridled, violent response to what is considered wrong-doing. Criticism of the blanket bombing of the Second World War, the use of nuclear weapons, the “shock and awe” of the

second Iraq war centres on this second principle. Is the violence proportionate?

A third principle is that action in war should be particular. Retributive violence should discriminate between the wrong-doers and those around them. The fact is that in modern warfare it is very difficult to do so. Wars take place now where people live, not between armies in a designated field. Nevertheless, our despair at learning of wedding parties or schools being bombed, villages and towns laid waste, stems from our feeling that violence even in war should be able to discriminate between actual wrong-doers and those around them.

I write this in the peacefulness of my own home, but after a lifetime which involved a childhood spoiled by war and compulsory service in the armed forces (the last of the trained killers!). More importantly, my work has involved deep conversations with so many who have fought in wars: from those whose decisions involved the lives of many people to those who were just moved around; from those who killed, to those who were bereaved. War is not something I can banish to the realm of ideas and opinions. I believe I know something of its personal cost.

The principles of a “Just War” help us make a rightful judgement on the morality of a war. The cost is always personal. On Remembrance Sunday it is a good idea to remember the people involved, both those of the past and those caught up in war now. *yB*

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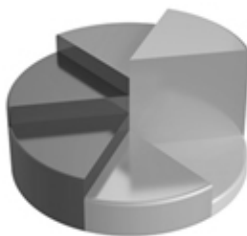
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