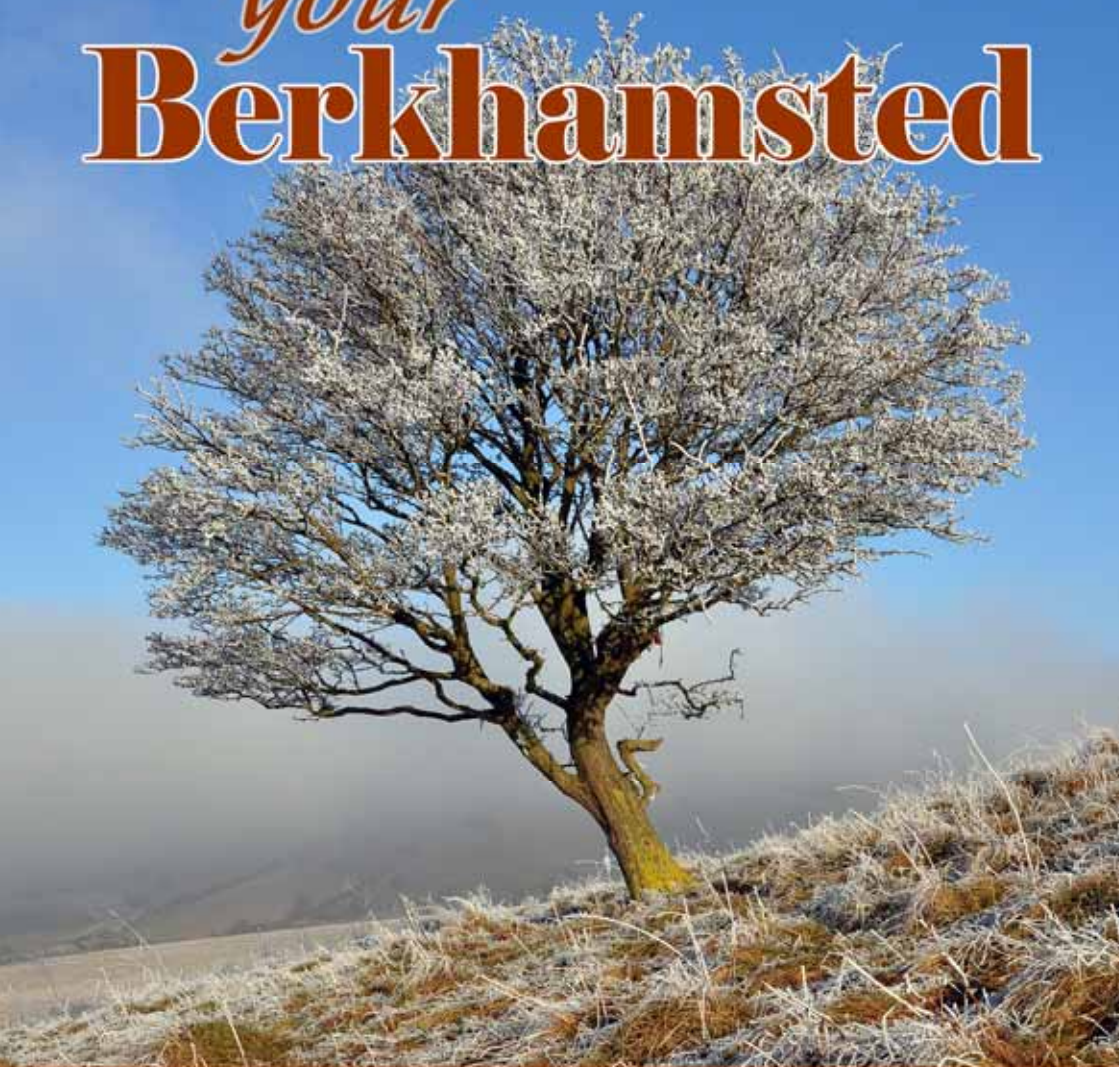


*the magazine for town and parish*

# *your* **Berkhamsted**



Action for a better world  
What Coalition policy may mean for Berkhamsted  
Berkhamsted Citizens Association  
The Bridgewater Sinfonia

February 2011

50p

# ***From the Editor*** February 2011



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

## **Welcome to the February issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.**

This month Elizabeth Jackson reports back on her recent visit to the Karunashrya hospice in India.

Bruce Nixon discusses the environmental and financial challenges we face, while Ian Reay assesses what the Government's policy of localism could mean for Berkhamsted.

We are pleased to announce our first photography competition. The winner will see their photograph on the back cover of a future issue of the magazine.

As always we bring you news from the community, as well as features on the Berkhamsted Citizens' Association and the Bridgewater Sinfonia. We have the fifth chapter of our serial *Little Spirit*, we hear about the winter life of bees, and the pew debate continues!

**Ian Skillicorn, Editor**

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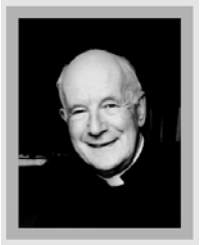
**We welcome contributions, suggestions for articles and news items, and readers' letters.**

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

Cover photo: courtesy of Luis Costa. See more at [www.luiscostaphotography.com](http://www.luiscostaphotography.com). Photo page 13: Reto Stöckli, NASA Earth Observatory (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center)

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## *Your Berkhamsted Leader* by Canon Anthony Lathe



It is a long time ago since I left the bride and groom at the church to rush off to see Wolverhampton play Norwich.

Then I was new to Norfolk but Wolverhampton was my childhood home and I had always been a supporter. Now, without much enthusiasm, I watch the occasional match on TV. But I do know people who watch snooker (all day?), and someone I know actually spends hours watching videos of old golf matches. So when nobody could miss the fact that England had won the Ashes in Australia I thought, “Good for them!”, but more than that, did I feel a slight twinge of national pride?

It was a reminder of the obvious, that we are more than individuals and our loyalties are important to us however trivial they may appear to others.

Certainly when people are critical of the Church of England, I feel it. When they take what happened centuries ago or something that is happening in a different part of the world and apply it here as a present reality it seems unfair and hurtful. So I try to imagine what it must be like being a British, peaceful, God-fearing Muslim nowadays. I knew Roman Catholic priests who were desperately hurt by being lumped together with those who had done dreadful things. This is not to overlook what some loyalties can lead to, making religion into an excuse for violence and hatred, football into a reason for vandalism, political protest into riot.

The heat in politics is often generated by an inability to want to recognise what might be good in another party’s policies, to crow over past mistakes, and to condemn someone when they change their mind.

Newspapers thrive on stories of conflict. “News” happens with wins and defeats, conflicting loyalties, people expressing dislike, hatred, distrust of one another. It might just be that all this becomes “news” simply because it is actually unusual.

In real life, everyday life, most people, most of the time, get on without conflict, without the need to win. In fact, the vast majority of people are going about their lives actually loving their neighbours as themselves where they are. So it is a pity we can’t ask if we are interested in the different loyalties of others, can’t engage in discussion, because we are afraid of being disloyal to our own ways, or feel that somehow any meeting will lead to conflict.

Loyalty is important to us, it gives us a sense of identity - yes, I’m originally from Wolverhampton! Loyalty can give us a sense of pride - yes, *we* won the Ashes!


In spite of what makes “news” we are fortunate that everyday life shows us that different loyalties need not lead to conflict. In spite of what I read in the papers, my experience in the church is that we have got rather better at this over the years. It is certainly not easy, but a variety of loyalties adds to everyone’s experience both in church as in society.

yB

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## *Karunashraya: abode of peace*

**Elizabeth Jackson** reports on her recent trip to the Karunashraya hospice in India

My recent trip to India was, as usual, humbling, and at the same time fulfilling.

While there I was asked if I would like to attend a conference on "End of life care". It was run by Dr Roshin Hallifax, an American who travels widely lecturing to various groups on "How to be with dying". The conference was interesting, with content that could well be used in our own Pastoral Care group. Aimed at doctors, nurses, physios and social workers from around Bangalore, I was glad to be able to fully participate and contribute.

Karunashraya, as you may already know, means "abode of peace", and it is certainly that. The fact that all the patients, and there are 50 beds available, are near death, does not make any difference. The Hospice motto, following on from Dame Cicely Saunders, the pioneer of the hospice movement in Great Britain reads, "Your life is important right up to the end and we will try and help you not only to die peacefully but to live until you die". This is carried out daily by all who work there. Volunteers come in each weekday for a couple of hours and go from ward to ward engaging those who are fit enough to either play "housey housey", do a jigsaw, have a game of twenty questions, or even draw or paint. These volunteers are just that, there is no special training, just a desire to help.

Some of the nurses who care for the patients are as poor as those that they care for. They may never have known a loving



home, let alone had any money, but they always go about their duties with a smile on their faces. An 18 year old junior nurse will receive approximately 360 rupees a month (around £5.50) for their personal use; board and lodging having been deducted at source. This seems very little but a few rupees goes a long way in India, and they are all happy. My white face is a novelty and I suppose I present as a mother figure!

Many of them regard Karunashraya as their home and some have been there for several years. All the girls have beautiful hair - long, black and so lustrous - tied up by day and long by night. They appreciated the hair ornaments that I took out for them, and the party at the end of my stay. To them crisps, savoury and sweet biscuits, chocolates and fizzy drinks are luxuries and I am always amazed how quickly the food disappears.

During my stay they wanted to do something for me and asked if they could give me a henna tattoo!

**(continues on page 7)**



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I decided that they could use the inside of my left hand up to my watch strap. After the party I let them loose on my hand. The next day even the Medical Director wanted to see the "artwork", which was an intricate pattern of leaves and flowers. It did look very pretty and, as they told me, was gone in two weeks.

Kishore Rao, the non-Medical Director, and Dr Sadanand, the Medical Director, were simply delighted with the £7,000 from the Petertide Fair. A letter of thanks to the PCC, in brief, said: "All of us at Karunashraya would like to express our thanks to you all for the donations collected and sent to us. All of these donations go directly to the patients by way of care, food and medicines."

The cost of funding a bed for a year is just over £6,000, this includes all nursing care (doctors, nurses, physiotherapy and social work), food, clothing, bedding, laundry, heating (hardly ever needed) and lighting. So, St Peter's can proudly say that Petertide Fair 2010 has done that. There were also many thanks for the dressings generously donated by the parish. I have never seen the pharmacy so well stocked.

My daily duties started with the usual

ward round, followed by dressings and then daily visits to those who could speak English. My most heart rending case was Mishl, a 3 year old boy with brain tumours. Surgery had been unsuccessful and he was heavily sedated and very near the end of his little life. Mum, Silvi, was constantly with him and his father and sisters came when possible. Silvi had no English to speak of but we just sat quietly together, mother to mother, words not being necessary. One thing which I found most heart warming was that when the girls came to see Mishl they were so natural and just clambered up onto the bed and sat beside him holding his hands, absolutely no fear of all his tubes and his rattling chest.

I had one day out with my lovely driver Girish and he took me west of Bangalore, out towards Mangalore, to see three wonderful Hindu temples.

Saravana Belgola Temple was high on a hill which meant a climb of over 2,600 feet to the top. Quite a climb up the steps of Indragiri Hill, but so worth the effort - a beautiful temple with a 58 foot statue of Gommateshvara, son of the first Jain leader. An inscription at the base of the statue is dated AD 981.

It was sad to say goodbye to all the people that had been so kind to me and those that had welcomed me into their homes, but I hope to go out again at the end of this year to offer my help once more, and to see how their fundraising is going.

I may also be asking for more unwanted dressings so don't throw any away!

*yB*

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# *The local beekeeper: not so busy bees*

**Crispin Baker** tells us what bees are getting up to at this time of year

Beekeeping is an ancient and global pastime and of immeasurable importance to us, the food we eat and the countryside we live in.

There are many factors involved in producing a jar of honey; the available forage, the bees themselves, the weather and of course the beekeeper. My wife and I have kept bees for six years now and produce a small crop that we retail as “Local Honey” at various local outlets, one of which is Fennel - Delicatessen in Lower Kings Road.

Many people ask us, “What are the bees doing now?” Actually not a lot at the moment. In a word - hibernating. Following autumn preparations, the bees are tucked up in a weatherproof hive surrounded by the expensive bee syrup fed to them last September (well we did pinch their honey!), and looking after a very small amount of brood. At this time of year the hive comprises only female worker bees. As their label suggests, they do all the work (this may sound familiar to some people!), looking after the one queen. She and her brood need to be kept warm, at about 35°C, so come the cold weather the bees form a rugby ball shaped mass inside the hive and convert the food they eat into heat. That’s pretty much it - occasionally on a warmish day a few may



come out for a drink and a pee (it’s very bad etiquette to do this in the hive as they are very clean insects) and then go back inside to complain to the others about the cold.

However it is worth mentioning one very

unwelcome visitor to the apiary at this time of year – green woodpeckers! As a lifelong birdwatcher I have long appreciated the colourful woodpecker, its dipping flight pattern, the early spring drumming and the unexpected pleasure of the bird table visit. But woodpeckers are not stupid and when times get tough under a blanket of snow they know a wooden box full of yummy bees and grubs dipped in honey when they see one. They have been known to peck their way into a hive and completely destroy it. So as a precaution part of our winter preparation is to cover the hives with a cage of chicken wire – that’ll keep the little blighters out!

That’s all folks, next time we’ll hear about the early spring build up in the hive. *yB*

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# *Take a pew!*

**Canon Anthony Lathe** reflects on the debate about pews

Have you been enjoying Julian Dawson's "News from the Pews"? As an occupational hazard I have had a lot to do with pews.

Actually, the place I was evacuated to as a child in the Second World War had its village history written by Richard Gough in 1700 around the construction of family pews in the parish church: The History of Myddle. As the priest in charge of many country churches, pews were a big thing. In one, the pews came so close to the screen that you could not conduct a decent wedding there. Early on I suggested removing the front two. They were removed, but only after I left some eleven years later. We had one church, a Charles 1<sup>st</sup> restoration complete with box pews in the front and benches for the peasants behind. It was interesting preaching from the top deck of the three decker pulpit to peer down at the congregation below who sat round each pew facing one another. In one church some pews de-materialised. It turned out someone was surreptitiously removing them to make bookshelves, but it made a lovely open space at the back of the nave. Nobody complained.

Suggest to a regular worshipper that they might shove up a bit to let someone else in or, worse still, ask people to move up to the front, and you had a parish crisis on your hands. Thoughts of a Consistory Court on the breakdown of pastoral relationships, visits by Archdeacons, concentrated the mind wonderfully.

Why all the fuss? Well, I think it has to

with feeling comfortable (an unusual word to associate with pews). If you want to feel comfortable in the place where the presence of God should be most easily experienced, then it is really helpful to go to the same place every week or even every day - familiar views, familiar people around you. This comfortable familiarity makes it all the easier to pray and to feel at home. Just sitting or kneeling with nothing to do, nothing new to get used to, is wonderfully easy and calming. In peace, thoughts can be concentrated where you want them, spiritual insight is more likely when there are few unnecessary things to get used to.

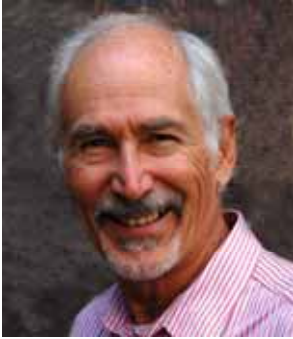
I wonder if this experience of comfortable familiarity is becoming harder. Sometimes it seems as if some of us want to be distracted, even cannot manage without distractions. To do one thing at a time, to concentrate on one thing for a length of time, is becoming quite hard. Simply to sit and allow what is going on to make its individual impact is beginning to seem strange.

Perhaps pews in church are not such a bad thing. They are solid reminders of the advantages of familiarity, of being comfortable in a particular place, for feelings of peace and spiritual insight to come more easily. Take a pew!

Mind you, "Take a chair!", especially if it is one of those especially designed for churches, would have the same effect, would be a jolly sight more convenient and open up the church wonderfully. But what would Julian write about then? *yB*

# Action for a better world

**Bruce Nixon** discusses the environmental and financial challenges that we face and explains why he thinks we shouldn't be bystanders



As a new year begins, there is widespread concern about the drastic actions being hastily implemented by the coalition to remedy the

financial breakdown. The coalition has many good ideas such as the National Wellbeing Project. And clearly action needs to be taken. But is it the right action? Will the measures achieve the desired outcomes or prevent even more severe breakdowns in the future? Has the process involved those with the most expertise, people on the ground and those most affected? Are they radical, as claimed, or risky, ideological and essentially business as usual?

Before offering my view, I wish to say I am not a supporter of any single political party.

The coalition's proposals are far from radical. They do little to change the unsustainable global economic model that is exhausting the planet's resources and failing to tackle poverty or make us any happier. It systematically transfers wealth from those who create it to the rich and powerful. It is based on consumerism, continuous economic growth, unrestrained free trade and the crazy global sourcing for lowest cost - with all the emissions, loss of work and insecurity involved.

Money created by credit and the need to repay debt is driving this unsustainable growth. Ironically, many of the measures proposed will lead to even more debt! And they bear down most on the poor, the young, the vulnerable and those least responsible for the crisis.

We have to face up to the threat of climate change and the fact that we live on a finite planet and must live within its limits. Some experts reckon we have only 70 months to act before climate change becomes out of control and possibly irreversible. Humans are already consuming 30% more than the eco-system can provide. If everyone lived like affluent Westerners, five planets would be needed. Meanwhile, the global population is estimated to reach 9 billion by 2050. We simply cannot go on like this. We need to challenge the myths, constantly repeated by governments, that continuous growth measured by GDP (really Gross Cost) and free trade are essential to provide jobs and prosperity. We do not need so much stuff and constant novelty to be happy. Consumerism leads to too much stress and spiritual poverty. We need to ask ourselves what kind of world, what kind of society do we want and what we mean by prosperity.

There is an alternative. It is "*Prosperity without growth*" lucidly elaborated in Tim Jackson's inspiring book of that name, the New Economics Foundation's "*Green New Deal*" and "*Great Transition*". Prosperity is redefined. The goal is the wellbeing of all - human beings and other life on the earth, living within the limits of

the planet, stabilising climate change and creating a sustainable economy. Creating such an economy would provide new worthwhile work, a greater emphasis on national self-sufficiency and security, more work providing services and a more sensible balance of work and leisure for everyone. Different foreign policies could save lives and the vast sums spent on war.



We have to face it: we in the West are taking more than our fair share; we need to consume much less and enable other peoples to have healthier and more fulfilling lives. It's called *Contraction and Convergence*.

There are growing demands for radical reform of the money system, banking and taxation. However, many of the solutions are not sufficiently understood by the general public. For example, 95% of our money is created by commercial banks through credit. This system, providing the banks with huge profits from "creating money out of thin air", adds enormously to the cost of everything, especially public investment in infrastructure, schools, hospitals, transport and university education. When there is a financial crisis, the taxpayer pays dearly. It's a rip off! The creation of new money to meet agreed national requirements should be the sole responsibility of the Bank of England and national banks elsewhere. The commercial and investment activities of banks need to be separated and proper regulation restored. The size of banks poses a huge risk to the taxpayer. We also

need to transform unsustainable, unjust and unnecessarily complex and costly taxation. Tax policy needs to encourage enterprise and employment, provide incentives for sustainable development and renewable energy. It should discourage the use of non-renewable

resources and provide funds for green investment. Tax evasion deprives government of vast resources that could pay off national debt. A Tobin tax on speculative international financial transactions could provide resources for development. Space does not allow me to elaborate further. Comprehensive proposals are provided by the New Economics Foundation, James Robertson's "*Sane Alternative*" [www.jamesrobertson.com](http://www.jamesrobertson.com) and the Positive Money campaign [www.positivemoney.org.uk](http://www.positivemoney.org.uk)

There is a growing consensus about what has to be done. Bold, inspiring leadership is needed to make it happen. Governments, too close to vested interests, are unlikely to provide it. So what is to be done? We cannot afford to be bystanders. We must engage. There are 6.7 billion of us throughout the world. We have immense power if we use it. We have to inform ourselves, educate politicians and demand that they do what is needed. Our role must be to campaign, lobby and demonstrate. *yB*

Bruce Nixon is author of *A Better World is Possible – what needs to be done and how we can make it happen* available free from: [www.bruce-nixon.com/betterworld.html](http://www.bruce-nixon.com/betterworld.html).

# *Little Spirit*

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

## Chapter Five: A Reward by **PJ Marvell**

In the sleepy light of the early morning Little Spirit sat under the big windows at the back of the church. It was his favourite place to be, and he always went early to sit there and look through the books that he borrowed from the children’s corner. He didn’t understand why, but when he sat in the light, slowly turning the pages of the stories, his worries fled away. The light seemed to bring his parents and tiny sister close to him, as if they were just around the corner, and he wondered if they were well and if they thought of him as much as he thought of them. Sometimes a tear would roll down his cheek, but the warm light would always dry it.

Little Spirit heard the grind of the clock tower machinery and knew he must get back to the tower, the church would soon open and the gentle rhythm of its day would begin.

The young boy trudged up the rugged stone steps in a trance, even forgetting to lock the tower door. He felt so tired and lonely that he decided not to go out of the church through the secret tunnel, but stay inside. He just wanted to curl up in the pile of blankets and his trusty old curtains that he had stored in his latest hideout at the back of a gloomy cupboard, in the ringing chamber. Deep in his heart he knew that he couldn’t stay hidden in the church for ever, but there was no option but to wait until the weather was better and he could search for another home, or was forced to leave.

As he fell into a light sleep, Little Spirit’s thoughts mixed with dreams of his family and also of the golden sun-shaped statue that he had found a few weeks earlier. It still stood on the ledge in the secret tunnel.

The young boy woke with a start as he heard the creak of floorboards in the ringing chamber. He knew it wasn’t the young Curate as he would stride across the floor whistling, checking the bell ropes or talking proudly to any visitors. Little Spirit didn’t dare move but lowered his head slightly to peer through a crack in the bottom of the old wooden door. The point of a black shoe stared back at him, and then Little Spirit remembered. He hadn’t locked the tower door and now the strange man who wanted the key to the tower was about to find him! He pressed his head harder to the floor and held his breath. The handle to the door jiggled and then started to turn. The door opened an inch. The boy pressed his eyes tightly shut.

‘Can I help you?’ called the voice of the Curate.

The door closed.

‘No thanks,’ said the man turning around quickly, ‘just admiring the ringing chamber. The tower door was unlocked...’

‘Was it!’ said the Curate. ‘I’ll have to have a word with the bell ringing team- they’re supposed to lock it after practice.’

*(continues on page 19)*



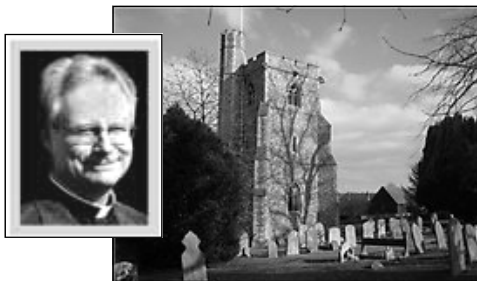
## ***New Job, New Challenge, New Way of Life*** by Fr John Russell

Moving from Non Stipendiary Assistant Curate in the Great Berkhamsted Team Ministry, to full time Team Vicar of Great Gaddesden, Little Gaddesden and Nettleden was always going to be interesting.

My previous full time experience had been with just one parish, albeit with a deanery youth chaplaincy role and later, Area Dean; and so as October 31<sup>st</sup> last year approached and with it my Licensing Service, *'I'm going to be hitting the ground running'*, I thought, as I began my new ministry. Who was I kidding? Running? Never mind running, more like sprinting!

A friend reminded me that the one time you didn't want to begin a new parish ministry was coming up to Advent and Christmas and yet it genuinely has its advantages. There is a huge learning curve with any new job, but in the Christmas period, you meet lots of people in a very short space of time and quickly people get to know who you are. Rightly people often say to their parish priest, *"Oh Vicar, I suppose Christmas is your busy time"*... (although I'm not sure when the quiet time is). However there is a grain of truth in that, but I have no regrets starting when I did.

Any new start; a new year, a new job, a new school, a new home, can be both exciting and daunting. Certainly with such a short run-in time to Advent and Christmas, life has felt a bit like a helter skelter, but now I am beginning to find my feet and getting to know some of the people and the area and I feel a bit more in control.



Great Gaddesden: St John the Baptist Church. Nigel Cox

There are many challenges – such as trying to remember people's names; all the people in the parishes have just two new names to remember, Karen and John; we have to remember tens, if not hundreds.

Having had just one parish as my sole responsibility in the past, running three different churches now is a totally new experience, they are each very interesting and surprisingly diverse. It means six Churchwardens, three PCCs, three Treasurers and so on and that means that at times, I feel like one of those clowns at a circus who spins plates; they go up and down the row giving each one an extra spin from time to time, just to keep them on an even keel. One thing I never suffer from is boredom, and something I am delighted to say is that I have had huge support and encouragement from everyone –colleagues and members of all three congregations, for which I am truly grateful.

The other big change for me is the amount of garden I have; from a small town garden I now have 1.5 acres and in fact the first question the Archdeacon asked me when he offered me the job was, *'I hope you like gardening?!'*

## ***New Job, New Challenge, New Way of Life (cont)***

The reality of our lives is that we are constantly having to adapt to change, some of our own choosing, some not, it can be exciting, but it can be daunting too and it is at these times that our faith can really help and support us.

The Virgin Mary had to live in a world which for her was turned upside down when the angel Gabriel visited her to inform her that God had chosen her to bear his only Son. Mary's faith was tested to the full; the same for the first twelve apostles, called by Jesus, they left homes, jobs and families to follow the path set by their Master.

The most constant factor in our lives can

be our faith, through that faith we can cope with all that life may place in our path, confident that through everything; good or bad, painful or difficult, joyful and exciting, God our Father, will bless us and strengthen us through his Holy Spirit.

The way we nurture and grow our faith is like anything else in life, it needs to be worked at and practiced, in the case of our faith, through prayer, through receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist, reading and studying the bible and by the example of our lives.

Photograph credit: © Copyright Nigel Cox and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence (Wikipedia)

## ***St Peter's Adult Confirmation Classes 2011 by Fr Michael Bowie***

The new Bishop of Hertford, Paul Bayes, will visit St Peter's for the first time on Pentecost Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, to offer the sacrament of Confirmation.

In Confirmation we make our own commitment to the baptism vows which were often made on our behalf by parents and godparents; it also confers the privilege of receiving Holy Communion.

We have a large number of young adults in our congregation. Some don't receive Holy Communion, mostly because they aren't confirmed. Some others who do receive (having been admitted to Communion in other churches) have also indicated that they would like to seek Confirmation. And some have indicated that they would just like to know more about the Christian faith.

We'll be offering teaching sessions for



adults, under the title *This is our Faith*, in the Lady Chapel of St Peter's on the five Sunday afternoons in May and the first Sunday of June. A crèche will be provided in the Court House for couples with small children.

Anyone who wants to know more about the faith is welcome to attend; those who attend will be eligible to be confirmed, if they wish to take that step, on 12<sup>th</sup> June.

## ***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
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***

Does anyone know how to unpick the lock of a pew box? I find myself incarcerated. On the whim of a petty functionary of the Oak Pew Preservation Society, who has decided that it would be hilariously appropriate to lock me in the aforesaid abominable contraption. As I continue my readings from the fount of all human knowledge, otherwise known as Wacky Pedia, I am struck with a revealing connection to the North West Frontier. And I'm not talking Lake District here. Somewhere a lot drier. I believe I have found evidence for an international conspiracy that links the introduction of

church pews with inter tribal rivalry in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Easy for you to say. And the key to this knotted web of intrigue? As international travellers will know, the IATA code for Peshawar International Airport is none other than PEW. You see? Everything falls into place So, I find myself pretty much up the Khyber without a paddle.

Peshawari Nan anyone?



# February Parish Diary

Sun 1st	<i>tbc</i>	February Church Walk, <i>All Saints</i>
Mon 7th	7.30pm	Cowper Society Winter Talk: David Gauke on Life in the Houses of Parliament, <i>St Peter's</i>
Mon 28th	7:30pm	Cowper Society Winter Talk: Ian Bartholomew - 'Experiences in the Arctic', <i>The Court House</i>

## Registers

**Baptisms** (none)

**Weddings** (none)

### Funerals

10 December— Peter Butler (St Peter's)

Sunday Services	St Peter's	All Saints—February
	8:00am Eucharist	6th 10:00am Morning Worship
	9:30am Sung Eucharist & Sunday School	4.00pm Christingle Service
	6:00pm Evensong	13th 10:00am Holy Communion
	<i>First Sunday in month Family Service at 9:30am</i>	20th 10:00am Morning
		23rd 10:00am Morning Worship
		27th 10:00am Holy Communion

## 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](http://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk) and at [www.allsaintsberkhamsted.org.uk](http://www.allsaintsberkhamsted.org.uk)

*(continued from page 14)*

‘But are you perhaps looking for something?’ the Curate pressed.

‘I’ll just be off,’ said the man and walked across to the door.

‘Lots of people come up here to look for clues of The Lost Sun,’ said the Curate. ‘Never been found, big reward if it is though! Yes, lots of money for the return of The Lost Sun.’

The man stopped in his tracks and Little Spirit sat bolt upright in the cupboard hitting his head on a beam - luckily at that moment the clock machinery noisily churned another hour to a close and neither the Curate nor the man realised that they had just solved a big problem for a small boy hidden in a cupboard. A reward! Money to find his way home.

As soon as Little Spirit could no longer hear the voices of the man and the Curate, he carefully opened the cupboard door and made his way down the stairs. At the bottom, he opened the tunnel, closed it behind him and lit his candle. He quickly made his way through the eerie crypt to the tunnel entrance and to the shelf where the Lost Sun stood. Its golden rays sparkled in the glow of the candle and to Little Spirit its light felt as warming as the light from the big church windows.

Little Spirit left The Lost Sun in its hiding place and wondered what to do next? He wasn’t sure who to tell. He ran to the end of the tunnel, climbed out and hurried across the graveyard. Should he tell the Curate or the Vicar? How would he explain? – his English was still very poor.

He wandered out of the graveyard, down a

steep road and round the back streets which he now knew so well, and ended up by the canal. He walked along the tow path and stopped at the Totem pole.

‘It’s you!’ said a bossy voice.

Little Spirit swivelled round. ‘Hola Eliza!’ he said smiling, he was sure she could help him.

‘Come to tunnel,’ said Little Spirit holding out his hand, ‘please.’

‘You can ask me in Spanish if you like,’ said Eliza, ‘but I haven’t got long, mother’s visiting grandma and I’m supposed to be back inside in twenty minutes.’

As they ran back to the graveyard, Little Spirit told Eliza, in Spanish, all about the man and the Curate, the tunnel, the Lost Sun and the reward. But he didn’t tell her he was hiding out in the church, not yet.

They were running across the graveyard so fast that they didn’t see the man with the pointed shoes sitting calmly on a bench. He watched them as they reached the far corner of the graveyard, heave up the stone and climb into the tunnel.

The man with the pointed shoes smiled, walked across the graveyard to the tunnel entrance and waited. *yB*

### ***Readers’ Letters***

We welcome your letters, by email or post.

Please refer to the contact information and copy dates on page 30.



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# Photography competition



We invite you to submit your photograph of Berkhamsted or the surrounding area to our first photography competition.

The winning entry will be published on the back cover of a future issue of Your Berkhamsted and the photographer will be credited in the magazine. Copyright of the photograph will remain with the photographer.

## Rules:

***Only one photograph can be submitted per person,***

Photograph must be the entrant's own work,

Photograph to depict a scene/landmark in Berkhamsted or area within 4 miles,

Entries to be judged by editorial team of

Your Berkhamsted. The judges' decision is final.

## How to send your photo:

**PLEASE NOTE COPIES SENT BY POST CANNOT BE RETURNED**

To send your photo please post it to the usual editorial address found on page 30, or you can email it to us at: [editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk).

Please include your name and a contact phone number.

The winner will be announced in the May issue. Good luck! yB

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# ***Berkhamsted Citizens Association***

## **Susan Johnson** tells us about the work and aims of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

As many recent events have reminded us, nothing is set in stone, not least the town where we live. The Berkhamsted Citizens Association has been around for 86 years and, in all that time, it has consistently tried to comment on and influence life and development here for the benefit of the whole community.

Classed as a 'civic and amenity society', the BCA takes an active part in the conservation and improvement of Berkhamsted, Northchurch and the surrounding countryside by stimulating interest in the built and natural environment; encouraging good practice and design (through our annual Environment Award); and commenting on planning applications and what is now called the Draft Core Strategy (formerly the Borough Local Plan). The latter is probably the most high profile part of our work, but does not stop us commenting on other diverse matters such as parliamentary boundary reviews, train timetables, car parking strategy and canal refurbishment. We are anything but 'single issue'!

We aim to keep you in the picture through regular newsletters (supplemented by our website [www.bcacitizen.org.uk](http://www.bcacitizen.org.uk)) and keep you entertained by our activities, which include meetings with guest speakers, rambles and occasional social gatherings, and judging and awarding the Best Christmas Shop Window. We also do one-offs like the Hustings for General Elections, last held in May 2010. We represent the views of ordinary residents

on several organisations, many of which we helped to found.

Presently our annual subscription is £5 per household. This modest sum, which entitles you to a quarterly newsletter and free entry to talks and events, covers the cost of printing the newsletter, hire of halls and speakers' expenses. If we undertake projects (such as our recent tree-planting in Castle Hill/Castle Hill Avenue) we rely on the proceeds of our extremely popular Footpath Map for walkers, now in its nth manifestation and available through local outlets.

We have always relied on our membership to support our activities and, in return, the Committee and sub-committees put in hours of work on Berkhamsted's behalf. If you are not already a member, please consider joining. Membership numbers are important to make the BCA heard by those who make the decisions about this town's future. We also need more members willing to serve on the Committee. Think about what you can do for Berkhamsted! *yB*

Contacts:  
The Membership Secretary  
15 Shrublands Avenue  
Berkhamsted HP4 3JH  
Tel: 01442 865882

The Secretary  
33 North Road  
Berkhamsted HP4 3DU  
Tel: 01442 866075



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# *The Bridgewater Sinfonia*

We take a look at the history of the local orchestra



“An orchestra *for* the community *from* the community” is how the Bridgewater Band (now ‘Sinfonia’) was billed at its inaugural concert in St Peter’s Church, Berkhamsted, in May 1998. The orchestra’s publicity officer went on to add that “the vision of the players is to bring to the community their passion and enthusiasm for live performances in a friendly, intimate environment where their audience can participate fully in their love of the classics”.

The orchestra began with a group of four local professional musicians who asked conductor Adrian Davis (then the recently retired Director of Music at Berkhamsted School) to persuade many local professional and semi-professional

orchestral musicians to join with the area’s most talented and enthusiastic amateur players, to form what became The Bridgewater Sinfonia. Since those early ‘heady’ days, under Adrian’s direction, the orchestra has gone from strength to strength, having presented 12 seasons of four concerts – each containing a wide mix of symphonies, concertos, choral works, overtures etc –including works by composers ranging from Bach to Brahms, Mahler, Elgar, Tchaikovsky, Nielsen, Vaughan Williams, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Shostakovich, Rubbra and Adams. Soloists have included world class pianists – Tom Poster, Anna Markland, Martyna Jatkaukaite, John Lill and Alexander Ardakov; instrumentalists David Pyatt (horn), David Campbell

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The high quality and great variety of the concerts has consistently been maintained, resulting in increased audiences who have shown their appreciation and enthusiasm – as the Bridgewater Sinfonia grows in stature and reputation both here and abroad - in Spain where the orchestra has recently played at the principal concert halls of Madrid and Zaragoza – including for Spanish Television broadcasts. The present season has two remaining concerts – in March and in June, when popular and familiar works by Brahms, Gershwin, Ravel, Wagner and Vaughan Williams will be played. In 2008, Sir Andrew Davis, one of Britain's most respected and distinguished conductors readily agreed to become the Sinfonia's Honorary Patron. Later that year, Antony Hopkins, the renowned broadcaster and composer was made an

Honorary member of the Sinfonia. The Bridgewater Sinfonia is a local orchestra of which the community may justly feel very proud. Long may it flourish. *yB*

**Concert on Saturday 5th March at 7:30pm in St Peter's Church:**

Wagner Overture; Die Meistersinger; Ravel Pavane pour une infante défunte; Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue (Tom Poster piano); Brahms Symphony No 1 in C minor.

Conducted by Adrian Davis.

Tickets: £13, Seniors £11, U18 free, Dacorum Card 20% discount; online [www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk](http://www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk); phone 01442 873205 or from Aitchisons, Berkhamsted or Perfect Pitch, Chesham.

## ***Oxfam Bookshop***

An exciting new venture for Oxfam hopes to open its doors for business in February. A specialist book and music shop is planned for the old Wine Rack premises and will enable the charity to offer an expanded range of both categories and take full advantage of the generous donations it receives. It will allow the existing shop to offer a bigger selection of donated goods.

Volunteers are urgently needed to staff the new outlet. Although people with specialist knowledge in either field would be particularly welcome, anyone who can spare a few hours a week will find an enthusiastic reception.

There are myriad tasks to be done, apart from the counter. Banking, pricing and preparing book and music stock for sale, gift aid administration, posting online offers – all need volunteers to enable the operation to run smoothly.

To find out more contact the manager Jane Hockings at the existing Oxfam shop at 202 High St or ring 01442 864225.

## ***Comic relief at Oxfam***

The Oxfam shop in Berkhamsted will shortly be acting as host to Honkus, Chucklechomp and Captain Conk, this year's must-have accessories for Comic Relief. The familiar red noses will be accompanied by pin badges, car noses and, a first for Oxfam, novelty headbands called Deely Boppers. Sainsburys is the only other High St. store selling the range. Comic Relief Day is March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Oxfam is one of the charities which act as a channel for Comic Relief funds to support projects helping poor and disadvantaged people worldwide. Its work among farmers in Mali has benefited from a generous grant.

So if you are planning to do something funny for money, visit Oxfam first. There is a great selection of fancy dress too. Demand for red noses is always high and supplies can run low as the event approaches, so shop early.

## ***Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society***

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 8pm at the Civic Centre:** *'Small Man Beorcham'* by Bob Clark, former owner of Birchnells. Come and learn more about Percy Birchnell, local historian.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March, 8pm at the Civic Centre:** *'The Tring Hundred, its Boundaries and Berkhamsted.'* By Ned Hunt, Principal Land Agent Rural Estates, HCC, and Society member.

For further details of the Society visit the website:  
[www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk](http://www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk)

## ***The Cowper Society***

The Cowper Society presents Three Winter Talks.

**Monday 7th February 8pm in St Peter's:** David Gauke MP for Hertfordshire South-West, speaking on life in Parliament.

**Monday 28th February 8pm in the Court House:** Ian Bartholomew, speaking about his experiences in the Arctic.

**Monday 14th March 8pm in the Court House:** Roger Moorhouse, author of the acclaimed recent history - *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler's Capital*.

Free Entry. Retiring Collection. There will be wine beforehand.

### ***Berkhamsted Branch WEA***

**Saturday Schools 10 – 4pm** (bring your lunch with you. Coffee/tea served)

5th March  
Ways of Knowing - Caroline Ellwood

14th May  
Twentieth Century  
English Music\* - Jonathan Darnborough

18th June  
Local Churches - Madeline Edmead

Price: £25 each or two for £45

**Fridays - lunchtime talks with discussion, 12—2.30pm** (bring your lunch with you. Coffee/tea served).  
Sessions run 12 noon to 1pm; lunch; 1.30 – 2.30pm

25th February  
Alchemy and Science - Neale Monks

18th March  
James Bond and the  
Bletchley Park Connection - Sue Curran  
Price: £10.00 each; 3 for £27.

All at the Friends Meeting House, 289 High Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 1AJ  
\* (venue yet to be confirmed)

For more information contact Mary Fountain on 01442 823168 or visit the local branch website at [www.weaberhamsted.co.uk](http://www.weaberhamsted.co.uk)

### ***All Saints' Church***

There will be a Christingle Service at All Saints' on Sunday 6th February at 4 pm.

### ***Sundays Together***

Lunch at the Court House first Sunday of the month. More details from Elizabeth Jackson on 864382.

### ***Berkhamsted Film Society***

Films are shown at the Civic Centre on Berkhamsted High Street. Screenings start at 8pm.

**Mon 7th/Tues 8th February**  
Up in the Air

**Mon 21st/Tues 22nd February**  
The Secret in their Eyes

For more information about the Society and the film programme for the rest of this season go to:

[www.berkhamstedfilmsociety.co.uk](http://www.berkhamstedfilmsociety.co.uk)

We welcome news of your community event for these pages. Please refer to the contact information and copy dates on page 30.

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# **Localism**

## **Ian Reay asks what localism means, if anything, for Berkhamsted**

The Coalition Government recently announced what it called a “ground-breaking shift in power to councils and communities, overturning decades of central government control”- namely the Localism Bill. This, it was said, would put an end to top down control and the hoarding of power by central government and allow local people to run their neighbourhoods in their own way. But will it make much difference to a town like Berkhamsted? It is easy to be cynical after decades in which governments of all colours have steadily emasculated local councils, with the result that only a minority of people any longer bother to take part in local politics or local elections. Are we really seeing a genuine shift in power back “to the people”?

Some of the measures proposed don’t seem to be about devolving power back to parish or town councils at all but rather about providing them with the power to take over community facilities or assets that would otherwise close, such as libraries, pubs or post offices. But if these facilities are closed that is presumably because they are not financially viable and it could be a heavy financial burden for a parish council to take them over, unless volunteers can be found to do the work previously done by paid employees.

There are measures that could make a significant difference. For example, parents and teachers now have the right to set up new state-funded schools in response to local needs – so called Free Schools. But I do not sense any great

movement to do that in Berkhamsted where the quality of schooling is not in general a source of dissatisfaction.

Arguably the most important devolution to the town level that could emerge from the Localism Bill is to do with planning. At the moment all planning responsibilities rest with the Borough Council. This until now has had to conform to policies laid down from above – from the Regional Assembly. The Bill abolishes the Regional Assemblies and although the Borough will retain its general powers over development control the Bill also proposes that town and parish councils will be able to define their own neighbourhood plans. These will have the full weight of the local development plans that are currently used to determine planning applications. At the moment a town council has no power over the local planning at all except as a consultee and in that it has the same rights as any other group that is consulted. If this part of the bill is retained in the final legislation, and if my reading is right, the Localism Bill will give the Town Council a much more significant role in defining the policy framework for the town’s future development.

House builders are nervous about this change in the rules because they believe that it will be a charter for nimbys to prevent significant future development. But this view ignores the fact that housebuilding is now at its lowest peacetime level since 1924. The current system of top-down targets simply doesn’t work. *JB*

