

the magazine for town and parish

your **Berkhamsted**



Special Commemorative Issue:

Our Lady of Walsingham comes to Berkhamsted

Christopher Green on St Peter's brasses

What's happening in Berkhamsted this month

The collapse of Birtchnells

March 2011

50p

From the Editor March 2011



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

Welcome to the March issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

This month's special issue marks the visit to Berkhamsted of Our Lady of Walsingham. You can read more about this historic event in Fr John's leader and on pages 16 and 17.

The collapse of local landmark Birtchnell's has been the talk of the town and we have a photo and article about it on pages 20 and 21, with more to come next month.

With so much happening in our town we have begun a new feature, Around the town. Please let us know your community news for future issues.

This month we also have features from many of the organisations which are active in and around Berkhamsted, as well as the sixth chapter of our serial *Little Spirit*. We are also very pleased to have a contribution from former town and parish magazine editor, Christopher Green.

Ian Skillicorn, Editor

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.

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Cover photo: courtesy of Scott Liddell.

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Your Berkhamsted Leader by Fr John Pritchard



Sometimes, quoted to me by Fr Michael, I am reminded that my old college principal once referred to Ripon College, Cuddesdon, (where I trained for

ordination) as a “womb with a view”. If you haven’t visited Cuddesdon, let me assure you, like a womb it is a safe place, unlike a womb, it is set on a hill overlooking the South Oxfordshire countryside. Rolling hills and farms shape the horizon. A rather mole-attacked croquet lawn and apple orchard add to the idyllic English country parish experience. So located in a village which sought to nurture and provide a secure place for learning, “soon to be” clergy, in their most embryonic form, as ordinands, study scripture, pray and contemplate God’s purpose in our world’s history, and in our personal lives.

In St Luke’s Gospel, Chapter 11 we read, “While he (Jesus) was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!’ But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!’.”

In Mary, we see a person who as mother of Jesus is referred to in Scripture as “blessed” for it was her womb which bore Jesus. In Mary we see a person who first amongst others in our Christian history responds to God’s word and is obedient. In Mary, we see an awesome woman offer every part of her identity, her womb, her compassion, her grace, her patience,

experience and life in the service of God.

The Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham honours the vision granted to Richeldis de Faverches and honours Our Lady. The vision, repeated three times, detailed the Virgin Mary showing her the house in Nazareth where Gabriel had announced the news of the birth of Jesus, and Mary commanded Richeldis to build a replica. On Friday 4th March, the image of Our Lady, which graces the Shrine at Walsingham, will be borne in procession along Berkhamsted High Street, from the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church to Berkhamsted School Chapel. There will be services, youth activities and refreshments to accompany this historic moment in town churches’ history.

Though we might be used to the statues which surround the High Altar at St Peter’s, this ancient image of Our Lady represents the culmination of all God’s people in saying “yes”. Mary uniquely bears witness to our Lord, and all generations have called her blessed. On Friday the 4th March, we will have a chance to respond to her presence amongst us, to celebrate the incarnation, the presence of our Lord, and in celebrating the Mother of Our Lord, we celebrate our faith and our joining with Mary in saying “yes” to God.

“Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!” *JB*

Please see The Last Word on page 31 by Fr Michael for news about Fr John’s new appointment in London.

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Around the town

The latest news from around Berkhamsted



The town's Rotarians and their army of helpers are gearing up for this year's Half Marathon and Fun Run. It takes place on Sunday 6th March, starting at 10am from the cricket club. It's too late to enter the Half Marathon but if you want to try the 5 mile Fun Run you can register on the day between 8.am and 9.30am at the Berkhamsted School Pavilion. It will cost you £9 (£8 for under 16s) and all proceeds go to local charities. Why not use the opportunity to get sponsorship from friends and family to support your favourite good cause?

If you simply want to watch the fun from vantage points around the town, you can park free of charge in the station car park courtesy of London Midland. This is the 29th year the Rotary Club has organised the event and a record entry is anticipated.

Buy a gift with a difference for Mothering Sunday and support the work of The Mothers' Union with families around the world. Order online at www.makeamothersday.org or phone 020 7222 5533 for a catalogue, and make

another mother's day too.

You would be a fool not to take advantage of the fabulous bargains on offer at the Oxfam Children's Wear event on April Fool's Day at the Berkhamsted Civic Centre. There will be a complete range of children's clothes for the spring and summer season, from school to swimwear, and a splendid selection of games and books.

The sale will last from 9am to 11.30am and organizer Nicky Evans has a target of £6000, which will enable the overseas aid charity to help women in Zimbabwe whose lives have been blighted by drought and flood to learn new farming skills so that they can feed their families. Work is also underway in Pakistan to help farmers recover from the devastating floods there.

Family budgets are under great pressure and one way to ease the strain is to take advantage of the excellent value clothes available, benefiting families overseas whose finances are under even greater strain as world food prices rise inexorably. When 80% of your income is spent on food, even small increases can be catastrophic. One mother in Zimbabwe described how she put a pan of water on to boil in the hope that her children would drop off to sleep before they realized that there was no food.

So help yourself and others by visiting the Oxfam Children's Wear Event on Friday 1st April at the Civic Centre from 9am.

(more news on page 7)

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If you're disappointed to have missed taking part in the Rotary's Half Marathon why not join the Hospice of St Francis on Sunday 10th April for the second marathon around Brighton? A registration fee of £40 will secure your place, and the minimum fundraising target is £750. Participants will receive a support pack with training and fundraising hints and tips, a running vest, and access to a nutritionist to help you stay healthy, fit, and ready for the challenge. To register contact call 01442 869555 or email fundraising@stfrancis.org.uk

Ashlyns School is 60 this year and a number of events will be held to commemorate this special occasion. One of these is an open weekend in May when the school will be open to all. The weekend will include tours of the school, open classrooms with memorabilia from each of the last six decades, films based on the experiences of former Foundling School pupils and a celebratory concert on Sunday 15th May.

Please get in touch with David Pipprell on dpipprell@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk if you have anything connected with the

beginnings of the school or from your time at the school - school exercise books, photos, old uniforms, yearbooks - which you could lend the school. They are particularly keen to hear from people who were at school in the 1970s, '80s, '90s and early 2000s.

Calling all dog walkers - take part in a 9km sponsored walk for you and your dog on country paths, raising money for Lions Local Charities and The Hospice of St Francis. It's simply a lovely stroll through the Berkhamsted countryside on the morning of Sunday April 10th starting at 11am from Ashlyn's School. It's a chance for you to get your four-legged friend doing some fundraising and do something different on your Sunday morning stroll. Join up with friends, bring the kids (the route isn't suitable for pushchairs however) and have some fun. All sponsorship money will be split equally between Lions Local Charities and the Hospice of St Francis. Registration forms are available in the Hospice shops. For more information, email berkodogwalk@hotmail.co.uk or call 01442 875417 or 01442 863185.

The Women's World Day of Prayer will be celebrated in Berkhamsted on Friday 4th March with a service at the Sacred Heart Church in Park Street at 2pm, followed by refreshments.

This year the service has been written by the women of Chile and the Berkhamsted address will be given by Mrs Carolina Bowie, herself a native of Chile.

All are welcome to attend, men as well as women! JB

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Purple crocuses herald a brighter future

Geoff Budd explains why we may soon be seeing Berkhamsted in bloom

By the time you read this month's edition of Your Berkhamsted, the grassy bank outside St Peter's church on the corner of Castle Street will hopefully have been transformed into a purple carpet.



colour purple being symbolic of the dye into which children who present for vaccination must dip their finger to show they have been treated.

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus.

Why so? Well, back in October Rotarians from the Berkhamsted Bulbourne club, along with fellow Rotarians throughout the country, planted millions of crocus bulbs in public spaces as part of Rotary's "Thanks For Life - End Polio Now" awareness campaign. "Thanks For Life" aims to eradicate polio in those few remaining parts of the world where it persists. Those of us living in the developed West may think polio is a thing of the past but sadly that is not the case. It is still all too common in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan.

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, determined a few years back to do something about it. Through his Charitable Foundation he has made substantial funds available for an eradication programme and has entrusted the Rotary movement with the task of mobilising the army of volunteers necessary to carry it out. But there are strings attached. Rotary itself has to match the Gates's funds to the extent of \$200m, which it is doing through the "Thanks for Life" campaign. The purple crocuses are an integral part of that campaign, the

Once contracted there is no cure, which is why early immunisation is crucial. Since Rotary began its immunisation programme polio has been eradicated in over 120 countries. The number of new cases has reduced by more than 99% since 1985. These figures demonstrate that this crippling disease is beatable and although the total cost may seem daunting, the simple fact is that a child can be immunised for life for just 50p.

That's why Rotarians throughout the world are putting their efforts into this campaign and why members of the local club, assisted by pupils from Victoria School, spent a damp Friday afternoon last autumn planting over 5,000 crocus bulbs outside St Peter's. When they emerge in February/March, not only this year but for many years to come, they will not be just a harbinger of spring but will serve as a reminder of the crippling effects of polio and of the efforts being made by so many devoted people to overcome it

www.thanksforlife.org
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The 2011 Petertide Promises Auction



The giving of time and talents has always been integral to the Christian ethos and, this spring, a perfect way to do this is to participate in St Peter's forthcoming Petertide Promises Auction.

As part of its 30th anniversary year, worshippers at St Peter's and Berkhamsted locals are being invited to offer their time, talents or possessions which can then be auctioned at the event to raise money for charity. And, as it's been twenty years since the last promises auction at the church there must be many dormant talents in the town that need re-discovering!

The 2011 Promises Auction is aiming to raise thousands which will be split between this year's nominated Petertide causes, the Berkhamsted based Sunnyside Rural Trust, which helps adults with learning disabilities and, overseas, the McCabe Educational Trust, where St Peter's will be supporting a project to build a new school library in Nepal.

All kinds of promises are welcome (as long as they're legal!) and Berkhamsted

residents are invited to spend some time considering what they could offer. Ideas include knitting a blanket, helping someone with a few hours gardening or DIY, ironing shirts, offering music lessons or taking someone's 'Rover' for a walk. Or, maybe contributing some spare tickets to a must-see event or offering someone else the chance to do something they've never tried before - whether it's taking a spin in a classic car, horse riding or a personal training consultation.

All the promises need to be submitted by Friday 10th March to Judith Limbert by telephone on 01442 873626 or Prunella Murray by email on prunellamurray@btinternet.com. The list of Petertide Promises will then be available from Sunday 12th March (in church and on the Petertide Fair website) in readiness for the Petertide Promises Auction event which is being held at the Court House (adjacent to St Peter's church) on Friday 25th March at 7:30pm.

Tickets for the actual bidding event, which cost £5 to include wine and cheese, are expected to sell out fast but even those who can't attend on the evening can still bid. All details on how to do this will be published on the Petertide website - www.petertidefair.org.uk - from Sunday 12th March.

Auctioneer Donald Flatt, of Estate Agent's Cole Flatt, ably assisted by glamorous assistants from members of St Peter's congregation, will be running the evening, which is expected to be lively and fun as well as raising a significant sum for the 2011 Petertide charities. *yB*

The Hospice of St Francis - total care when time is precious



The Hospice of St Francis has its origins in a vigil of prayer at St Peter's church in June 1979, when a group of people saw a vision of service to those suffering incurable disease.

Over thirty years later the Hospice, at its newest home in Shootersway, provides palliative care to patients with a life limiting condition, not just cancer, but also heart, lung, kidney or neurological disease. It provides this care at home, in hospital and in beds at the Hospice, and its Supportive Care team helps families through the experience of the illness or death of a loved family member.

Every year the Hospice helps over 700 patients, and supports over 1000 family members and friends. What many people do not realise is that all this care is free to

the patients and their families. But there is a cost to the Hospice to provide all these services - over £3 million a year.

The Hospice now employs over 150 people, and has 950 volunteers. These volunteers offer their time, energy, commitment, skills and dedication to help with the running of the Hospice. People volunteer for many reasons, such as personal experience of the Hospice or of bereavement. Some are retired, and looking for something to add structure to their day. Some want to 'put something back' into their local community. Others are looking to rebuild their confidence and skills, following a break from work. And while some want to offer existing skills, others want to learn new ones. The Hospice is also fortunate enough to benefit from volunteer nurses and doctors.

The Hospice's gardeners meet each Tuesday morning, led by the volunteer Head Gardener - they maintain the beautiful gardens according to a plan, but have their own budget for plants etc. They also accommodate several corporate volunteering teams each year - they work them very hard! Gardens provide patients with a peaceful, colourful environment to walk within or admire from their bed, and they also provide a space for families to spend precious hours together, enjoying themselves.

Christmas is never over for the Christmas card team! They meet all year round - as soon as Christmas is over, this volunteer team is working with the Retail Manager to bring together samples, and choose and order a wide range of Christmas cards for the following year. Christmas cards raise money for the Hospice, but they are also an important reminder to everyone who receives them of the work of the Hospice of St Francis.

The Supportive Care team offers emotional and practical support to a large number of patients and carers. There are over 70 volunteers in this team, offering counselling and emotional support to patients and carers in a variety of ways, and the nature of this role means that the volunteers themselves need a chance to 'unload'. There simply isn't enough staff time to offer this important service to all volunteers, so some volunteers have now been trained in 'clinical supervision'. In this way the volunteer team can support itself, with minimal support from staff, which keeps staffing costs to a minimum, and offers a challenging and enriching role to volunteers.

Volunteers from all over the Hospice are involved in monthly coffee mornings, when the doors of the Hospice are opened to members of the public, offering refreshments, a chance to talk to staff and volunteers, and an opportunity to look around. These coffee mornings are supervised by a volunteer and staffed by volunteers - paid staff attend to answer questions from the public, and offer support where it is needed. Public education is a large part of the work of any Hospice - encouraging conversations about death and dying.

Karen Filsell, Voluntary Services Manager, says: "All too often, as managers we simply decide what volunteers should do. When we involve our volunteers in decisions about what we do or how we do it, we acknowledge the skills and knowledge they bring to their roles - volunteers have a much more fulfilling time, and our patients receive better care."

The Hospice of St Francis provides a range of services in the Hospice and beyond, for patients and families living with life-limiting illness in Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempsted, St Albans and surrounding villages. *yB*

If you wish to offer support or would like to know more about volunteering opportunities, please contact 01442 869555 or visit www.stfrancis.org.uk. There is news of the latest fundraising events in Around the town on pages 5 and 6.

To find out more about your local hospice, visit:
www.helpthehospices.org.uk

Little Spirit

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

Chapter Six: The Toy by **PJ Marvell**

In the furthest corner of the graveyard, after waiting for half an hour by the tunnel entrance, the man with the pointed shoes bent down and wrenched up the stone slab. He glared into the darkness. He wiped his sleeve across his brow and ran his hand over his jacket pocket and felt the small lump inside. His desperation to get the reward for finding The Lost Sun finally overwhelmed him and he lowered himself into the ground.

At the other end of the tunnel, Eliza wrinkled up her nose, ‘it absolutely stinks down here!’ she said.

Little Spirit turned the candle light towards Eliza and looked confused.

‘Smelly,’ said Eliza flapping her hand in front of her nose.

Little Spirit grinned and excitedly beckoned Eliza over. ‘Here, here,’ he said with a heavy Spanish accent, pointing up to a rough stone ledge. He and Eliza stood at the side of the tunnel and stared at the golden statue glittering in the candle light.

‘The Lost Sun,’ said Eliza softly, ‘it was in the newspapers a few months ago. Mother showed me the picture. There’s a big reward if it’s returned to the church.’

Little Spirit tugged Eliza’s sleeve. ‘Spanish please,’ he whispered.

‘Oh, of course,’ she said and repeated her sentence.

After much debate about what to do and who to tell about The Lost Sun, Eliza and Little Spirit agreed to move the statue out of the tunnel and hide it in the church. Then they could find the Curate and show it to him.

After a struggle they finally managed to lift the statue off the shelf, their arms shaking under its weight. As they staggered through the crypt and up the stone steps to the tunnel exit, they didn’t hear the soft footsteps creeping towards them.

Eliza and Little Spirit dragged the Lost Sun into the tower stairwell and collapsed. Behind them the man raced up the steps to the tunnel exit.

‘MINE!’ he yelled as he clambered through the rough hole in the wall.

Little Spirit and Eliza leapt up.

‘Tunnel - Close!’ shouted Eliza, pushing the man off balance and back through the hole. Little Spirit swiftly pressed the stone which sealed the entrance.

‘Quickly,’ said Eliza and thrust The Lost Sun at the boy. ‘Hide!’ she ordered.

Little Spirit puffed his way up the winding stone steps and past the door to the ringing chamber. He must go higher. Up and up he climbed, listening for sounds from below. He wanted to call out to Eliza, but she could run like a hare and would quickly

get back to her grandmother's house by the canal.

The boy stopped at the bell room, remembering a small trap door in the wooden floor by one of the great iron bells. The weight of The Lost Sun had nearly dragged his arms from their sockets, but with a last surge of energy, he laid the statue inside the small space under the trap door.

Footsteps were hammering up the stairs now, Little Spirit had to hide. He ran out of the bell room and climbed silently up the winding steps until he reached the top. He reached out to the door to the roof, and stopped. The sound of footsteps had disappeared.

Little Spirit thought the man must be searching in the ringing chamber. The boy opened the door to the tower roof, knowing there was nowhere to hide. He looked to the angle of the sun in the sky and thought the bell ringers should arrive soon for their weekly practice. He then moved across the sloping copper roof and peered across the town. Glancing down and to the east, his heart lifted as he saw a jumble of brown curly hair and the flash of red wellingtons bounding down the road to the canal. Eliza was safe.

The boy moved back to the doorway and listened. Silence. He decided the only way he might have a chance to escape, if the man reached the top of the tower, was to wait in the space behind where the door would open. Just as he closed the door, he heard them. Loud footsteps pounded the stairs again.

The door to the tower burst open. Little Spirit tried to suck himself inside-out as

he stood trapped behind the open door. The ground seemed to move under his feet. The point of a black shoe appeared next to his worn-out trainers. A bell rang out.

'Sir!' called a crisp female voice as the ringing faded. 'Sir, you appear unwell, the steps are very steep. If you come down we can call a doctor and assist you.'

As swiftly as it had opened, the door to the tower slammed loudly, and Little Spirit was left alone on the roof with just the north wind for company.

The boy watched the shadows grow, waiting until they were 'end of day long' before he dare open the door. He walked cautiously down the steps, checking the trap door in the bell room – The Lost Sun was safely hidden. He looked inside the cupboard in the ringing chamber and found his precious old curtains torn and dumped in a heap. Eventually, he stood on the bottom step and pressed his ear against the door that led into the church. He unlocked the door and opened it three inches, just enough for him to squeeze through.

Now standing in the church, Little Spirit heard a sniff and a cough. Somebody was there. Pressing himself close to a step that ran the length of the chapel floor, the boy slithered across to the other side until he reached a pew. He looked out from underneath it. There was the man, sitting on a bench with his head bowed, clutching a tiny blue bear.

Little Spirit thought the man looked as if all the life had been stolen from him, and the young boy knew exactly how that felt.

To be continued next month...

Visit of Our Lady of Walsingham

We look forward to a very special visitor and an historic event in Berkhamsted this month



On Friday 4th March, Berkhamsted residents have the unique opportunity to witness a religious spectacle of the kind you'd usually have to make a pilgrimage to a far flung place to enjoy.

The town's young people and clergy will be escorting the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham in a candlelit evening procession through the town on its journey to St Albans Cathedral.

Our Lady's statue usually resides at the Norfolk pilgrimage town of Walsingham and rarely leaves her shrine, making this a

very special event for our local community and one everyone should feel privileged to be part of, whatever their religious viewpoint.

Accompanied by a police escort, the procession promises to be a fascinating and awe inspiring sight as it makes its way along Berkhamsted High Street between the Catholic and Anglican churches and, as our busy lives mean there is so little chance to watch something so steeped in mystery and religious tradition, everyone is urged to spare a little time to join the gathering.



A Saxon noblewoman, Richeldis de Faverches, lived in the 11th century at Walsingham; in 1061 she had a vision where she was taken by Mary to Nazareth to see the house where the Angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus. Mary asked her to build an exact replica in her town so Walsingham became England's Nazareth.

The structure which Richeldis built became a focus for pilgrimage until its destruction in the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538 under Henry V111, being re-built again 400 years later in 1921. In this year a new statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was created, based on an image found on a seal from the medieval priory, and this remains a focus for prayers to this day, 950 years on.

Families with children and young people will be leading the Berkhamsted procession which will see the image of Our Lady participating in a special Ecumenical service of the Rosary at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 5pm before processing along the high street at 7pm to Berkhamsted School's Chapel in Castle Street for a youth vigil.

However, everyone from the town is warmly invited to watch, line the route or follow the procession, and the church services are open to all.

The Statue of Our Lady will reside overnight in the town before moving onto St Albans Cathedral the following morning for a day of prayer, services and activities beginning at 11am, to celebrate 950 years of vision.

Father Michael Bowie, Rector of St Peter's Berkhamsted, comments, "We are thrilled to be welcoming the Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham to Berkhamsted. Having been on pilgrimage to the shrine in Norfolk many times, I feel very fortunate that our town has been chosen to receive Our Lady here and hope as many people as possible will turn out to greet her." yB



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 2.30pm. New members always welcome. Contact Kathie Lally, 863526 **Please note new meeting time**
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 Peter's. 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.

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

Registers	Baptisms	
	8 Jan	Arthur Laurence Size (<i>St Peter's</i>)
	16 Jan	Beatrice Grace French (<i>All Saints'</i>)
	23 Jan	Alfred Padraig Cummins (<i>St Peter's</i>)
	Weddings	
	4 Jan	Jayesh Aaron Gohil and Cordelia Sarah Catherine Hennessey (<i>St Peter's</i>)
Registers	15 Jan	Clive Thomas Paul Michel and Juliet Alice Richmond (<i>St Peter's</i>)
	Funerals	
	10 December—	Peter Butler (<i>St Peter's</i>)

March Parish Diary

Wed 2nd	<i>tbc</i>	March Church Walk, <i>All Saints'</i>
Fri 4th	2.00pm	Service for Women's World Day of Prayer: Address by Carolina Bowie, <i>Sacred Heart</i>
Fri 4th	5.00pm	Image of Our Lady of Walsingham, Ecumenical Prayer of the Rosary, <i>Sacred Heart</i> . Procession to Berkhamsted School Chapel for a Youth Vigil beginning at 7pm.
Sat 5th		The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham Celebrations, <i>St Albans Cathedral</i>
Sat 5th	7:30pm	Cowper Society presents Bridgewater Sinfonia, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sat 5th	7.30pm	Pathfinders and Explorers Fair for orphans in India, <i>All Saints</i>
Tues 8th	9.30am	Fairtrade Big Brew (until 12 noon), <i>The Court House</i>
Mon 14th	7.30pm	Cowper Society Winter Talk: Roger Moorhouse 'Berlin at War', <i>The Court House</i>
Tues 15th	12:00pm	Christian Aid Lent Lunch, <i>The Court House</i>
Wed 16th	7.30pm	Lent Holy Eucharist, (see 8pm), <i>St Peter's Lady's Chapel</i>
Wed 16th	8:00pm	First Session of Lent Course (see 7.30pm), <i>The Court House</i>
Fri 25th	7.30pm	Petertide Auction of Promises, <i>The Court House</i>
Thur 31st	7:15pm	The Very Revd Dr Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans 'The Meaning in the Miracles', <i>Tring Learning Centre, Tring School</i>

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'.

Treasurer

We are pleased to announce Jo Byrne to be the successor to Mike Below as Treasurer of Your Berkhamsted. With Mike's help, the transition between treasurers has been smooth and seamless. For this and for the many years Mike has dedicated to this publication, we are extremely grateful. His attention to detail in the accounts and in subscriptions has been valuable and deeply appreciated. We will look forward to his continuing contribution to the life of the magazine in different ways.

Jo is a very well known member of the congregation at St Peter's. The talent she brings to the team means that together we can develop the subscriptions and widen the readership of one of Berkhamsted's older publications.



The morning after the collapse

Birtchnell's on Sunday 30th January. A large crowd gathered to witness the scene. The building has since been demolished and the town waits to learn what will replace it.

Ghost on the high street

Sam Limbert explains how social networking has kept him in touch with events back home

This is the first instalment of a regular column with my experiences of the University of Surrey in Guildford. For the first article, I'm focusing on the big news closer to Berkhamsted.

As media and communication technology continues to rapidly progress, you only really notice how reliant upon it you are when it isn't there. After being back at university for a week after Christmas, my laptop decided it no longer wanted to show everything on the screen properly, which was convenient as I had two pieces of coursework due within two weeks.

Many trips to and from the university library to get the work finished and typed up followed, due to the need for everything to be word processed. However that still meant time in my flat without the internet or television, which made me feel surprisingly cut off from the world. However, where one new technology had let me down, another was keeping me in touch with others. It then led to me finding out the big news from Berkhamsted, despite being in Guildford, before most others back in the valley.

After awaking early on a Sunday morning, needing to get to London to watch the FA Cup, I checked my phone for messages and was able to use it to look at Facebook. Some of my friends on there had posted messages along the lines of "Berko's exploded". A few pictures from their mobile phones were posted and I saw on my screen the wreckage that was Birtchnell's, with parts of the building

strewn across Berkhamsted High Street. As I'm studying Sociology, Culture and Media, this was a real example for me of how new media has become an important part of our society. Firstly, my reliance on my laptop for information and communication through the internet meant I felt cut off, even though I could still go to the library for access, whilst the technology of mobile phones meant I could see the big news of Berkhamsted whilst others in the town were waking up unaware of what they'd see when trying to drive down the High Street.

Despite my geographical distance from the event, I was alerting others in the town that the ghost of Percy Birtchnell was haunting the High Street. *yB*

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Fairtrade Fortnight

Katy Brookes-Duncan tells us about Fairtrade Fortnight

You will probably be aware that 'Fairtrade Fortnight' is an annual event in which fair and ethical trading values are celebrated. But did you know that the concept was pioneered by the Fairtrade Foundation in the United Kingdom, and held firstly in 1997 in Scotland directed by Barnaby Miln? Miln's campaign to get every supermarket throughout Scotland to stock Fairtrade products turned out to be highly successful. It spread to the rest of the United Kingdom the following year.

Awareness raising and the promotion of Fairtrade products to the public are the main objectives of the fortnight. This year Fairtrade Fortnight will be celebrated from 28th February until 13th March and during that time you're bound to read, hear and see a lot about Fairtrade in the national and local media and as you go about your daily routines. This is because the Fairtrade Foundation's theme for 2011 is 'Show off Your Label'.

For Fairtrade Fortnight 2011 they're asking the nation to show off about buying Fairtrade, which offers 7.5 million people in the developing world a more secure future. You can show off Fairtrade any way you want. Just be loud and proud about how you (or your business or community group) support farmers and workers in developing countries!

We are asking schools and community groups to help decorate the town with bunting to celebrate.

Contact k.b-d@hotmail.co.uk for more

information if you'd like to take part. We will add our total lengths to the Fairtrade Foundations bunting world record attempt. We are also asking the town shops to ensure their windows feature their Fairtrade products, so keep your eyes peeled.

Traidcraft is once again encouraging supporters to hold a Big Brew. Through the combined efforts of this year's 3,500 Big Brews the target is to raise £60,000 towards Traidcraft's vital development work. Your local Big Brew will be held in the Court House on Tuesday morning 8th March – all welcome. Tea, coffee and home made cakes, all using Fairtrade products, will be on sale. Traidcraft are also showing off their honey label and telling people how fair trade has helped thousands of beekeepers in Africa and Latin America. Do come along to find out more. *JB*

Saturday 2nd April at 7:30pm

PIANO RECITAL:

Alexander Ardakov – Bicentenary of Franz Liszt - Valee d'Obermann, Sonata in B minor, Petrarch Sonnet No 104, Concert Paraphrase of Rigoletto (Verdi), Liebestraum No 3, Tarantella, Consolation No 3 and Mephisto Waltz

St Peter's Church

Free Entry: Retiring collection

More news on what's on in Berkhamsted this month on pages 4, 5 and 27.



- Rewires
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The local beekeeper

Crispin Baker continues his monthly beekeeping diary

March signals the start of the beekeeper's year, and if we're lucky a whiff of spring in the air at the beginning of the month will herald the spring build up of the colony inside the hive, as the queen starts to increase her egg laying rate. But this in itself can bring the problem of more mouths to feed from dwindling winter stores (remember our expensive bee food from last month) coupled with no nectar to harvest from yet-to-open flowers during the cold weather. So in early March we routinely feed bee candy (purchased from apiary equipment suppliers) by placing a small block of what looks like bakers fondant directly over the cluster of bees inside the hive. A warm day is preferable to do this as with the roof and insulation taken off the hive the bees can quickly chill (remember last month, they like to keep their brood and 35°C). That done, it's best to just leave them alone at this time of year.

A lot can be gleaned from just watching the hive entrance for the next couple of weeks as on a warm day the bees will start to fly and work on a much more regular basis. New bees are hatching and maturing, throwing out the dead winter bees, tidying, and cleaning the hive ready to receive the benefits of any spring flowers. At the hive entrance a very good



sign is to see bees bringing in fresh pollen which is attached to their hind legs in what are known as pollen baskets. After a hard morning foraging amongst the flowers, bees landing exhausted at the entrance are

sometimes laden with huge 'shopping baskets' of pollen, and I can just imagine them muttering about how the shops were packed – and thanks for all the help!

Pollen is essential to feed new brood, so if a lot of pollen is coming in it is a sure sign that the queen is laying well and much new brood is being produced.

By the end of the month it may be warm enough to take a peek at the colony properly and even, providing the weather has taken a turn for the better, maybe add the first super for honey storage. At the moment however, spring seems a very long way off.

That all folks, next time we'll hear about hive components and the yellow peril – oil

Bee friendly plants for this time of year:

Primrose
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What's On in Berkhamsted this month

Christian Aid Lent Lunches

Come to the Court House for soup and crumbles and support the work of Christian Aid on Tuesdays 15th March and 5th April, from noon to 1.30pm. Margaret Burbidge tel: 862139

'Walk Back in Time'

In conjunction with the Chiltern Conservation Board, the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society has arranged the following series of historic guided tours. Volunteers from the Society will give guided tours of Berkhamsted Castle and of other historic sites of the town centre, lasting 2 ½ hours, starting at 2pm from the Castle Visitor Room. Price £3 for adults, £1.50 for children. Sunday, 27th March, Sunday 17th April, Sunday 15th May, Sunday 19th June, Sunday 17th July, Sunday 25th September. Bookings are now being taken. Contact Jenny Sherwood 01442 865158 or email KSherw9100@aol.com

Bookings are coming in quite fast already for March and April but none as yet from Berkhamsted! Are Berkhamsted residents already so knowledgeable about their local town? What about all those new residents? Don't miss this opportunity!

Berkhamsted Castle guided tours

There are guided tours of Berkhamsted Castle for schools and other groups during the week and at weekends throughout the year. There is no charge for school and young persons' groups but a small donation is requested. Bookings are being taken now. Contact Jenny Sherwood 01442 865158 or email KSherw9100@aol.com

All Saints' Charity Fair

Young people at All Saints' Church in Berkhamsted are busy preparing for a

Charity Fair on Saturday 5th March when they hope to raise money to benefit orphans in India. The event will take place between 2pm and 4pm at the Shrublands Road church.

All Saints' Healing Service

There will be a service of wholeness and healing at All Saints' Church on Sunday 27th March at 4pm. All are welcome.

Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society

Meeting to be held at 8pm on Wednesday 16th March in Civic Centre Berkhamsted. AGM to be followed by a talk by Ned Hunt, Principal Land Agent Rural estates HCC and Society member, entitled 'The Tring Hundred, its Boundaries and Berkhamsted.' Further details of Society see www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk

Sundays Together

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

The Cowper Society

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

Concert: 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. Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm in St Peter's Church. Tickets: £13, Seniors £11, U18 free, Dacorum Card 20% discount; www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk; phone 01442 873205 or from Aitchisons, Berkhamsted or Perfect Pitch, Chesham.

St Peter's Brasses

Christopher Green takes us on a tour of the brasses of St Peter's



Memorial brasses with engraved figures, supposedly a likeness of the deceased, became fashionable in England in the 13th century. In truth, once the fashion was established, London craftsmen, who made most of these memorial brasses, had a number of stock designs which are readily identified. There are no 13th century brasses in Hertfordshire. The earliest brass in the county is in St Albans Cathedral and dated 1355. The earliest brass in St Peter's is younger by just one year. It is the second oldest in the county and is the memorial to Richard and Margaret Torrington bearing the date 1356 and now reset in wood on the wall of the south aisle. At Margaret's feet are two little dogs, representing faithfulness, each with a collar of bells. At Richard's feet is a lion representing courage. Above Richard's head is a shield bearing the Torrington arms. The same arms, and those of the Incent family, appear on the great stone tomb, beside the entrance to the vestry. This is now thought to be the tomb of Henry of Berkhamsted, who was Constable of Berkhamsted Castle in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Chauncy writing in 1700 says that in his time this tomb stood in the middle of the body of the church with the Torrington brass next to it, no doubt set in a stone ledger slab in the floor. Indeed, if you look behind the tomb of John Sayer in the Lady Chapel you can see the broken lower part of the slab with the indents in which the brasses were set.

The lion as a representation of courage is present again in the brass on the east side of the square pillar in St John's Chantry. This depicts a man in armour with a lion at his feet. It is thought to be John Raven, who was by tradition, Squire to the Black Prince. In Chauncy's time this brass was in the floor of St John's Chantry and Chauncy records an inscription in Latin, now lost, which in translation read *Here lies John Raven ... who died 15th March 1395*. There were other brasses set in the floor of St John's Chantry in Chauncy's time. The memorials to Robert and Katharine Incent which are now on the square pillar were originally in slabs in the floor and were evidently more elaborate than the surviving fragments. Robert's inscription tells us that he *died of the Great Sweating Sickness* in 1485. Chauncy also records the memorial brass of one Edmund Cook who died in 1409. This is now lost but a rubbing survives in the British Museum. Like almost all the memorials in the church, the brasses have had a chequered history - moved around as the church has been restored and re-ordered, destroyed by iconoclasts, or stolen by common thieves. Fortunately, some of what we have lost is known from the writings of early antiquaries.

Almshouse vacancy

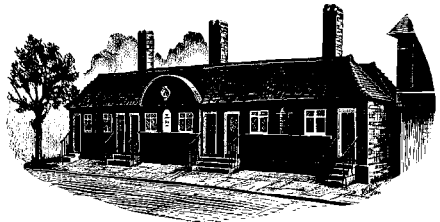
There is a vacancy in one of the four John Sayer Almshouses in Berkhamsted, which are situated at 235/241(odd) High Street - opposite the Way Inn Post Office.

The Almshouses date back to around 1684 – but they have been upgraded since! The residency qualifications are that the single-occupancy accommodation is for women in need who are Christians and who are resident in or have connections with the town of Berkhamsted and its surrounding area.

The compact accommodation provides a living room, bedroom, kitchen and “level-access” bathroom. There is a shared garden at the rear of the almshouses.

John Sayer Almshouses is a registered charity (no. 208191) administered by seven trustees, all of whom are connected with St Peter’s. It is a member of The Almshouse Association.

If you are interested in applying to live there, or if you know anyone who might be, please ask Michael Robinson – joint clerk to the Trustees (01442 863559) or Barbara Conway - chairman of Trustees - (01442 865798) for further details. yB



And sometimes the physical traces remain. When the carpet was relaid last year in the Lady Chapel and north transept and the old carpet was taken up, two ledger stones came to light bearing the ghostly indents of medieval brasses. One is evidently the slab from which the brass of Richard Westbroke has come. This memorial, dating from 1495, is now reset in wood alongside the Torringtons in the south aisle. The other slab is probably the original setting of a brass of about 1370 which is thought to depict Margaret Briggs. Like Richard Westbroke and the Torringtons, Margaret is now reset in wood in the south aisle.

There is more to tell about our brasses, including their unexpected connection with memorials in Sussex and Suffolk.

yB

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Fr John's new appointment by Fr Michael Bowie

We congratulate Fr John on his appointment to a second curacy as Assistant Priest at All Saints Margaret Street in London. I am very grateful for all that he has done at St Peter's (and that he has been happy to stay here for nearly the whole four years allowed by the diocese for a first-post appointment).

All Saints Margaret Street is a church with an outstanding tradition of worship and a vital city-centre ministry, to which I am confident Fr John will make a great contribution.

When he came to Berkhamsted I reminded you that the title parish has a unique privilege in helping to form a priest for the church. All Saints Margaret Street will benefit from that formation which you have helped to give; I hope that we shall also be able to forge a new personal link between our two congregations, as we have much in common.

Fr John will move some time after Easter: the date will be announced when it is certain. *yB*

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

I feel beleaguered. Hemmed in. A last stand to rank amongst the Alamo, Custer, Gordon, Paulus and Arnhem. And it is not often you will read those names in same sentence in a local publication. The OPPS are gathered in serried ranks. I am succoured by airlifts of nan bread. And carrier pigeons are able to carry these hurried jottings to the YB editor.

Since last month I have finally discovered who is responsible for the international conspiracy that finds me incarcerated, and let's face it, going mildly dotty. I can unmask this felon as no other than Pepé le Pew. Allegedly hailing from France, he strikes a remarkable resemblance to a skunk. Indeed, the whiff of rebellion hangs in the air.

But he will no doubt understand my *cri de coeur*. "Ils ne passeront pas". Which as we all know derives from the

exclamations of French drivers on the Paris ring road. *yB*

Adult Confirmation Class

St Peter's are 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 12th June.

Please contact Fr Michael Bowie should you wish to attend. *yB*



1061 AND ALL THAT!

The Shrine of Our Lady of

Walsingham

Celebrates **950** Years of Vision

Friday March 4th 2011 Image of Our Lady of Walsingham arrives in Berkhamsted. Ecumenical prayer of the Rosary offered at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 5pm. Procession to Berkhamsted School Chapel (Castle Street) for a Youth Vigil beginning at 7pm.

The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban
(by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter)

Saturday March 5th 2011

11.00 a.m. Arrival of the Image and EUCHARIST in St Albans Cathedral. The Celebrant and Preacher will be Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS

During the afternoon there will be activities for children led by the Walsingham Year4God team, workshops on youth ministry with Fr Stephen Gallagher, Shrine Youth Missioner; Why pilgrimage?...and more...

4.00 p.m. Evensong and Benediction with the Cathedral Choir.

Let's fill St Albans with the praises of God, as we keep alive the memory of that first 'Ave', the greeting that changed the world!