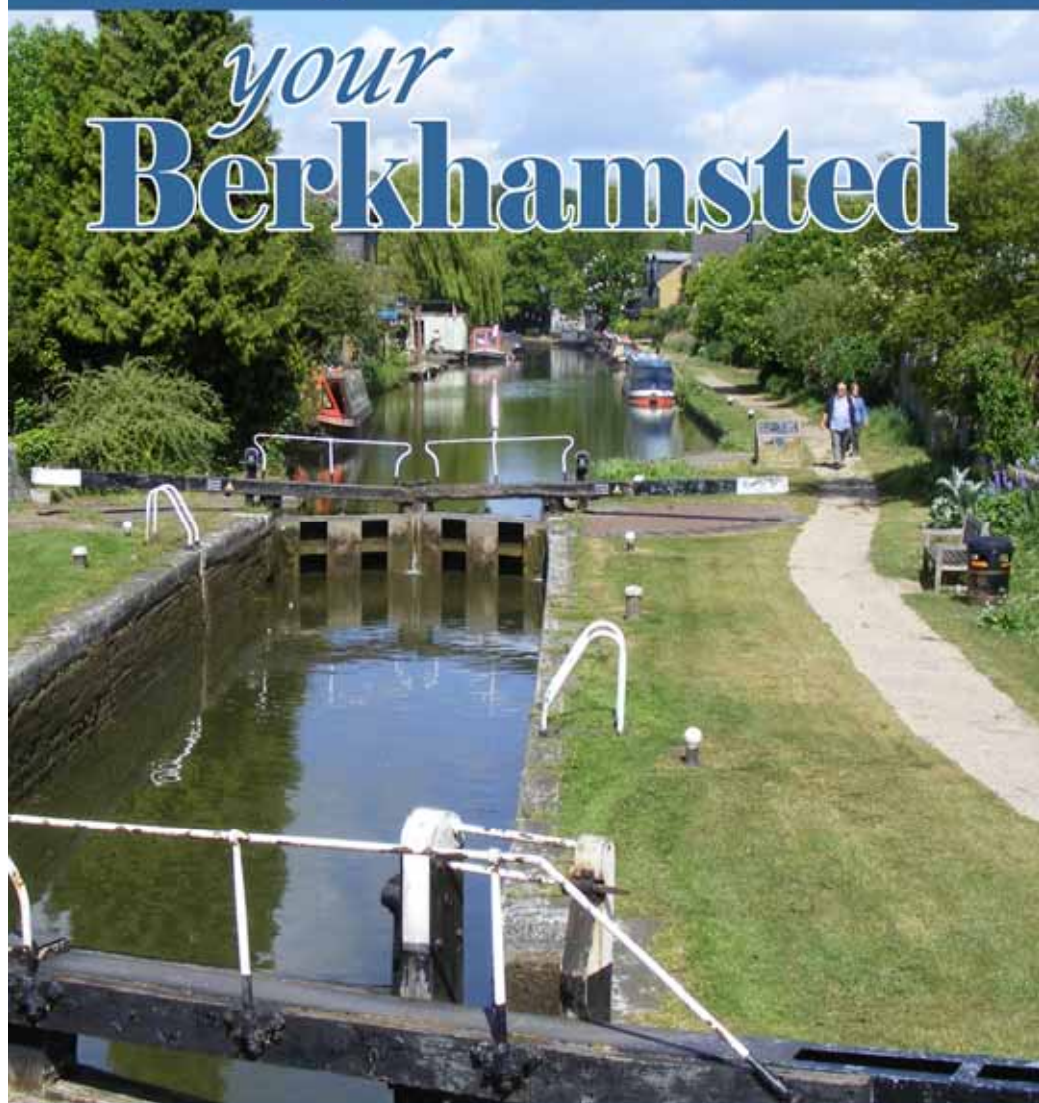


the magazine for town and parish

your **Berkhamsted**



Charity special: local people raising funds for home and overseas

Help save Two Oaks Pony Sanctuary

Build a home for swifts

Letter from America: a moving true life story from WWII

July 2011

50p

From the Editor July 2011



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

Welcome to the July issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

Reading this month's issue one cannot help but be struck by the number of people in our town who give their time, creativity and energy to making a difference in the world, whether it is to support people, or animals, close to home or those who live overseas. We may not all be able (or want!) to jump from a plane, complete a Triathlon or take on an exhausting bike ride, but hopefully many readers will feel inspired to show their support to some of the causes covered this month, in whatever way they can.

Our letter from Renee Vasos Tobin also reminds us of sacrifices made for us all many years ago. As we think of these brave young men, some of whom died far from home, is it perhaps time to consider a permanent memorial on the site of the American aircraft crash which happened sixty eight years ago?

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 for August to October's issues, please refer to page 31.

Front cover: The canal viewed from Raven's Lane, Berkhamsted. Back cover: Barney, Two Oaks Sanctuary, Berkhamsted. Page 13: Juvenile swifts rehabilitated by Deborah Lauterpacht, copyright. Deborah Lauterpacht.

Responsibility for opinions expressed in articles and letters published in this magazine and for the accuracy of any statements in them rests solely with the individual contributor. Your Berkhamsted has no affiliation with the Save Your Berkhamsted campaign.

Your Berkhamsted Leader by Rev Penny Nash



I recently attended a conference called 'The Weddings Project' which was led by the Bishop of Hertford.

The Weddings Project has toured around England reminding clergy in the words of Archbishop Sentamu that 'we are there for those who want to marry and need to say to England that Christian marriage is wonderful, encouraging more people to bring their love before God in a church wedding.'

We will more than likely at this time of year be hearing more banns of marriage being read out during our Sunday services each week, which reminds me of when I heard my banns being read 15 years ago. It was going along to church in our local parish to hear our names being read that was the beginning of us wanting to join the church community. I hadn't been a regular church 'goer' in my youth but our local vicar invited us to come along one Sunday to hear our names read out. The church community prayed for us and welcomed us with a real sense of sincerity that I hadn't come across before and so we kept on going to that church, becoming more committed as the years went on and the rest is as they say 'history'!

I came across a very interesting statistic a couple of years ago published by the Bristol Community Family Trust who stated; 'One major European survey published in 1999 found that by a child's

5th birthday, 8% of married parents and 43% of unmarried parents had split up.' I found that a staggering statistic that would suggest that marriage seems to provide more long term family security too. I wonder why that might be. Of course it might have something to do with the public proclamation and promises made at a marriage but I want to suggest that it goes much deeper than that.

I believe that the love that is required for a marriage to continue to blossom, is the sort of love spoken about in the bible. The sort of love that is about mutual submission – not an abusive and distorted submission that results in great harm to both women and men but about a love that gives allegiance to the other, tends the needs of each other and is responsive to the other. When two people are truly living in 'mutual submission' then they lose track of who's in charge. Over time reserves of love and trust are built up and power and control become irrelevant. There is a book of poetry in the bible called the Song of Songs where we find the quote 'I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine'. But I think one of my favourite quotes about two people becoming joined in marriage is from George Eliot who writes, 'What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined; to strengthen each other, to be at one with each other in silent unspeakable memories'.

May God bless all those couples getting married this summer, and those who may be celebrating their anniversaries, with a life-long union of love. *JB*

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Around the town

The latest news from around Berkhamsted

Summer Serenade

On Saturday 9th July at 7.30 pm please join us at a Summer Serenade at All Saints' Church by Robert Little and his professional musicians, including Berkhamsted's very own Kathryn Jenkin and her father Peter.

Another enjoyable event to support The Children's Society. Robert and his friends give their time and talents completely free to bring you this entertainment so please support them and help the Berkhamsted Committee raise more funds for the vital work of this UK charity, now threatened by government cuts. Tickets £10 at the door or from 01442 864968.

Recital and a concert presented by the Cowper Society

Friday 8th July at 1:00pm: Recital at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted. Fiona Duncan violin, Kevin Vockerodt piano. Free Entry: Retiring collection.

Saturday 23rd July at 3:00pm: Music Workshops Groups' Chairty Concert for Aylesbury Women's Aid: Songs from around the World, at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted. Conducted by Yvonne Brener. Followed by strawberries and cream. Free Entry: Retiring collection in



aid of Aylesbury Women's Aid.

Christian Aid Week

The total raised in Berkhamsted and Northchurch from the street collection and the market stall was £5,382.28.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Christian Aid's work helping people in poverty out of poverty. Margaret Burbidge.

Correction: In last month's article "Fresh from the farm" we incorrectly stated that Sunnyside Rural Trust is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm. The correct weekday opening hours are 8am to 4pm.

Your Berkhamsted needs you!

We are keen to hear from readers who would like to contribute articles to the magazine. In particular, we welcome submissions of short stories, poems and serials for consideration.

Are you a budding writer or journalist, or do you just have something you'd like to share or get off your chest?

If so, please go to page 27 for more details. yB

Please let us know your community news. Contact details are on page 31.

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Transition Town Berkhamsted

What it is, what it does and how you can get involved

Transition Town Berkhamsted (TTB) is a community led initiative working with residents, schools, groups and businesses to enable and encourage the town to develop local resources to become a sustainable, safe and healthy community ready to face the challenges of the future.

Many TTB activities are coordinated through themed action groups including food, energy and transport, but the underlying purpose of TTB is to empower the community to live more sustainably. As far as TTB is concerned Berkhamsted is already a Transition Town, and we are looking to the community to celebrate its achievements, learn from each other and support those wanting to do more. We therefore want to work alongside other groups and organisations to achieve our common aims, understanding the importance of working in partnership to share resources, knowledge and energy to bring about maximum change.

Last year's action included:

- Delivering home energy advice and audits with the Energy Savings Trust and Eaga (john.bell@deltarail.com);
- Supporting local organisations to find energy saving solutions (seb.beloe@henderson.com);
- Setting up and supporting local Eco Teams (gstevens@southridge.me.uk);
- Contributing to the developing Berkhamsted & Northchurch Transport Plan (emman72@hotmail.com);
- Berkhamsted Car Free Day (danny_bonnett@yahoo.co.uk);
- Tring & Berkhamsted Cycling

Campaign's annual Berko Bike Fest (www.tbcc.org.uk);

- Working with other local food groups around Dacorum to develop the Dacorum Sustainable Food Strategy, mapping producers and outlets for local food; seeking funding to employ a Local Food Coordinator for Dacorum, and inputting into the Dacorum allotment review (marionb@dsl.pipex.com).

2011 is looking to be a busy year for TTB, with plenty of activities for people of all ages and different interests to get involved in such as the Sustainable Transport Weekend (15-17 September) – three days of free fun activities and information looking at finding an alternative to getting into the car. The weekend starts with Car Free Day on Friday 15th focussing on schools and businesses; followed by a sustainable shopping day in the town centre with offers of free bike-courier service to take your shopping to your door and local producers invited to the regular market. The weekend will culminate on Sunday with the annual Berko Bike Fest and community day at Canal Fields with lots of fun activities for all the family ... even space hopper racing!!

To find out more you can come along to the Rising Sun at 8pm on the second Thursday of every month, where we meet informally to share news and ideas.

For contact information, project updates and details of events please visit our website:

www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk *yB*

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Legal eagles take to the skies!



A group of solicitors from Hemel Hempstead will be throwing themselves out of a plane to raise money for the Hospice of St Francis on July 23rd. The Legal Eagles team, from Pickworths Solicitors, will be plunging 12,000 feet in the hope of raising more than £1,200 for the hospice.

The skydive will be senior partner Ian Tottman's second tandem skydive jump but his first at Skydive Weston in Oxford. Taking the plunge with him will be two colleagues from the practice Shelia McEntee the practice administrator, and wills and probate solicitor June Yap. This will be the first jump for both of them. Says Sheila: "I have always wanted to do something that would push the boundaries

and fancied doing something airborne. I can't wait to do it and raising money for the Hospice is something which is close to my heart. It's at the centre of our community and provides care and support for everyone and we realise how important that is."

Adds Ian: "I am feeling fired up and ready to jump and so would ask anyone who would like to see their local solicitors jump thousands of feet out of a serviceable aeroplane, to sponsor us."

To support the Legal Eagles visit:
www.pickworths.co.uk or
www.justgiving.com/pickworthslegaleagles. yB

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Letter from America...

the story of Sgt. John G Vasos

Renee Vasos Tobin and her sisters tell us their father's story

In our December 2010 issue we carried an article by Dan Parry about a group of American airmen whose aircraft crashed in Ashridge in 1943. Thanks to the wonder of the internet the article was read by Renee Vasos Tobin, the daughter of one of the men involved in the crash. We were delighted to hear from her and thank Renee and her sisters for writing the following tribute to their father and his experiences.

I came across the December 2010 online issue of "Your Berkhamsted" which featured an article on a World War II air crash at Ashridge. My father, Sgt. John G. Vasos, was the tail gunner on that B-17 as part of the 305th Bomb group stationed at Chelveston during 1943. He did not walk away from the crash as was suggested in the article; I'll provide more information on that further on. My sisters and I appreciate that your magazine is helping to share the story of this B-17 crew's tragic night.

John G. Vasos enlisted in the US Army Air Force in 1942 as a 20-year-old and after many months of training in the United States finally shipped out to the European theater in October 1943. He arrived in England on November 2, 1943. According to his service papers he flew missions over Kiel, Bremen, Ludwigshafen, Cognac and the French Coast. My family and I learned from his home town newspaper, The Clinton (Iowa) Herald, that he flew 23 missions on 5 different B-17 aircraft. He and the crew



Sgt. John G. Vasos

of the "Piccadilly Commando" spent Thanksgiving of 1943 (25 November) floating on two rafts in the North Sea after belly landing their crippled aircraft until the British crew of a PT boat rescued them.

On New Year's Eve 1943 the bomber piloted by Lt. John Quillman was hit over France. The plane dropped out of formation with one missing and one damaged engine and attempted to return to England. They were set upon by 18 Messerschmidts and this is when the co-pilot was killed, Captain Quillman suffered what would be fatal injuries and the lower portion of my father's right leg was shot away.

continues overleaf

As stated in “Your Berkhamsted” the plane made a crash landing in the area of Ashridge and the crew was aided by a local nurse. My father kept an article from the Daily Mirror which tells about Red Cross nurse Mrs. Ruby Daley who is credited with applying a life saving tourniquet to one man's leg. John G. Vasos was that man and therefore the tail-gunner did not walk away unscathed.

Another article lists the nurse's name as Ruth Daly however I tend to favor the Daily Mirror which also names her husband as C.Q.M.S. Wilfred Daley. John was taken to an English hospital and after waiting sometime in triage was finally brought into surgery. He credited the English surgeon with performing the amputation of his leg above the knee in such a way as would allow him to wear a prosthetic leg. John spent nearly four months in hospital in Britain before being able to return to the U.S. There were more hospital stays back in the U.S. however he was able to return home for Thanksgiving 1944 and that's when he was interviewed by his hometown newspaper.

Some months later, while out with friends at their local tavern, John was introduced to Shirley Skonberg. They were married in August 1946 and moved from Iowa to California the following year. John attended Woodbury College in Los Angeles and worked as an accountant. John and Shirley had three daughters in the 1950s, Diane, Renee and Nancy.

My sisters and I adored our father and enjoyed family car trips and watching sports together. He told us stories about his time in England and how much he liked it there despite the war. On New



The crash site at Ashridge today

Year's Eve 1973 he told us about the events of that night 30 years before. My parents dreamed of making a trip to England but my father died suddenly in 1980.

Two years later in 1982, my mother and I visited London and made a particular stop at the American Chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral. Our mother passed away in 1994 but my sisters and I hope a memorial will one day be placed near the site of the crash at Ashridge and that we will be able to attend.

Thank you for your article and for paying tribute to these young crew members.

yB

Editor's note: Many thanks to Renee and her sisters for contacting us with their father's story.

We would be interested in hearing from any readers who have thoughts on the placing of a memorial for those involved in the air crash and will be following this up in a future issue of Your Berkhamsted.

Berkhamsted swifts

Hamish Burnett shows us how to make a home for our summer visitors

The common swift – *Apus apus* brings vital drama and life to Berkhamsted's air space from late May to Early August. Congregating in magnificent aerial shoals above the High Street, Church Lane and the Old Town Hall, these swifts loyally return from their wintering grounds in Africa to avidly search for food to raise their young or re-instate their social bonds in aptly named 'screaming parties' at dawn and dusk. We need to do everything we can to keep these seasonal messengers in Berkhamsted.



buildings are widely believed to have contributed to an observed decline of 30% of the U.K swift population since 1994. As such, the RSPB have placed swifts on the worrying Amber conservation status.

However, we can easily ensure we continue to enjoy the presence of swifts in Berkhamsted. We can all help by ensuring to take a note of swifts nesting in our neighbourhood and alert residents if we see renovations which may threaten access to their roosts. It's easily possible to renovate and conserve entrances to swifts nesting chambers if you know where they are! You can even install special nest boxes for swifts on high north facing walls. Comprehensive instructions and advice on all aspects of swift conservation can be found at: www.swift-conservation.org

Swifts feed on aerial plankton, small insects and spiders which owing to their small size are transported upon air currents. Their great speed and flying prowess allow swifts to collect enough of these small invertebrates to sustain themselves in almost perpetual flight. Fledged swifts won't land until reaching sexual maturity at 3 to 4 years when they must find nesting places.

Successfully finding a place to nest after 4 years on the wing is where many swifts face a great challenge in the U.K. Swifts rely almost entirely on pre-1940's building stock with nooks and spaces to nest in. The renovation of older homes and highly secure modern homes and

Members of Transition Town Berkhamsted are also aiming to create purpose built swift housing in suitable locations in the town. We are currently seeking suitable sites to position nest boxes – landlords, businesses and individuals with north facing or shady wall space above 5 metres who would like to host swifts please get in touch! Swifts are excellent tenants and produce no mess. E-mail me at: h.e.burnett@gmail.com. Let's keep the skies alive in Berkhamsted!

yB

The Hairdresser by Elaine Collins

Most of us go to the hairdresser's. Some of us go often, some of us go when we resemble the wild man of the woods, most of us go somewhere in between.

What do hairdressers do? Well, they look after our hair, obviously, but some of them offer skin and nail care, massages, even. We all have a responsibility to look presentable, we tell ourselves, as the credit card slides in and we tap in the numbers. Is that all hairdressers do? I would say that these are just part of what they do.

I visit the hairdresser when I perceive that I must. Never knowing what is in fashion, I am totally in the hands, or the scissors, of the young girl who looks after me. She knows never to colour or, as I would put it, mess about. I discovered my first grey hair, at the hairdresser's, when I was thirty eight. I was horrified. At that age, the odd wrinkle or crow's foot can be passed off as an expression line, a sign of maturity, but grey hair meant that I was getting older. I have got over that shocking experience. I had no choice. That grey hair has gone forth and multiplied, big time.

I sit docilely in a comfortable chair in pleasant surroundings, looking at myself as hair is snipped and tapered and chunks fall on the floor. I say that, perhaps I could have it done this way. The hairdresser replies that, that would be all right, but she thinks it would be better done this way. I capitulate. Despite her youth, she is always right.

We swap stories about holidays, the sales, the shops in Berkhamsted, the price of everything. I have someone's total attention. It occurred to me, only recently,

that we rarely make eyeball contact with our hairdresser. The hairdresser communicates with the back of our head, we talk to the mirror. Is that why a visit to the hairdresser takes on the role of the confessional? We seem to be able to chat quite freely.

Some of us stay with the same hairdresser for years. I know of someone who had her hair done by the same hairdresser for fifty years. The gossip must have changed from boyfriends, to weddings, to children and, after fifty years, grandchildren or, even, great grandchildren. Hairdressers deal with the depressed and the bereaved and generate a little comfort with a new hairdo. They know when to enthuse and chatter, and when a little peace and quiet is required.

On a more prosaic level, they know where every nit outbreak is occurring for miles, and can laugh about it, as they recommend some foul smelling liquid that gives off such fumes that a fire alarm can be triggered. I once laughed about nits and was admonished by an authority figure who maintained **that they had to be dealt with**. They do, but can we not laugh about them?

The trimming, brushing, combing and spraying finished, a hand mirror appears from nowhere. I inspect myself, front, back and sides. The grey hairs seem golden, the hairstyle is young and modern, and the wrinkles have miraculously disappeared. I have had a therapeutic gossip. I feel better about myself and, therefore the world. A visit to the hairdresser is far more than having the hair done. *yB*

From Land's End to John O'Groats

The Rev Jonathan Gordon of St Mary's Northchurch has begun a mammoth three week bike ride from Lands End to John O' Groats to raise money and awareness for Phakamisa.



About

Phakamisa

Phakamisa is a registered charity in the UK that raises money to support Aids orphans in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa in a place called Pinetown just

outside Durban. Phakamisa is pronounced "Pugameesa" and it is a Zulu word which means "to uplift the community". It is a hand up rather than a handout.

It seeks to support the very poorest and most vulnerable: the children left behind after the adults have died of Aids and who themselves are battling to survive living with Aids.

It is a ministry of the Pinetown Methodist Church, South Africa and it serves impoverished communities through the provision of educational training, resourcing and support.

15000 children are reached daily through the Caregiver and Educare programmes. The donation of £1 a month will cover the needs of one child for a month.

Please visit: www.phakamisauk.org or feel free to contact Marilyn Pain on 01442-877951 (South East Co-ordinator and Trustee)..

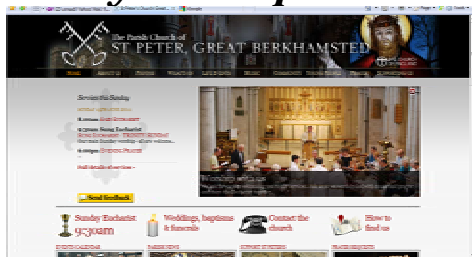
Marilyn is very happy to do talks and show DVDs of the projects and she also sells beadwork at school fêtes. *yB*

He tells us: "When I first heard about the work of Phakamisa in South Africa it was very inspiring. HIV AIDS has such a huge and devastating impact on poor communities and in particular on children. The charity provides help and support for those caring for children who are orphans or have been abandoned.

I am on sabbatical this summer and wanted to do something that could raise money for a charity. So the plan was to head to Land's End at the end of June and then towards John O'Groats. By cycling 50 miles a day this should take around three weeks to complete. I have a one-man tent and have rejoined the YHA to provide accommodation. If you are able to make a donation to the work of Phakamisa that will be great and will also provide the necessary encouragement to keep peddling!"

You can show your support by making a donation at : www.justgiving.com/Jonathan-Gordon1

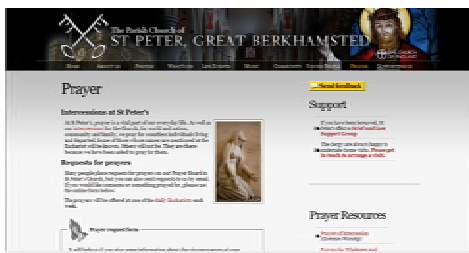
Ashlyn's helps create St Peter's online



Early in 2010 Fr Michael and I thought it would be a good idea to take a fresh look at St Peter's website. Over the past couple of years, the traffic on the Parish website has increased with local people looking not only for contact information regarding weddings and baptisms, but also for weekly services. So, never to shy away from asking the question, "does this work for us?" we embarked on a process of consulting with individual members of the PCC and the church community. We talked to Jamie Matthews to discuss his professional perspective on how we should present ourselves to our media savvy and image conscious generation. At the forefront of our conversation was the determination to present something authentic and real of our tradition and life together; a shop window onto St Peter's, so that what people see on the website reflects what they experience when they join us for services and the occasional offices.

We knew we didn't have the technical expertise or "image" imagination to make real what we wanted to reflect. So... with a timely meeting in the diary between Fr Michael and Mr Shapland (Head Teacher – Ashlyn's School) we asked if Ashlyn's students would assist us in developing some ideas and thereby create an honest reflection of St Peter's. This proved a terrific idea. Six students, including Sam Limbert, who attends St Peter's, all met with Fr Michael and me. Together we thought a lot about what we wanted to present, and also what they thought we should be presenting. These students were thoughtful, imaginative, respectful and talented; a consistent experience for us of Ashlyn's students.

They were only too pleased to help, we were relieved! Not because they simply gave us a solution, but because they were interested in what we did and wanted to influence for the very best how we present ourselves to the world as a Christian community at the heart of Berkhamsted. So some dozen meetings, lots of coffee, a revision of texts for the website and about 800 photographs later as a working group we had "broken the back" of the content and the way the website was going to work.



We had decided to include some more in-depth information on schools, Sunday School and choir, we wanted to introduce a feature by which people through the website could donate money to support St Peter's (please try it to make sure it works!) and an important and new addition to the website amongst others, the inclusion of the means by which people can ask for prayer to be offered at St Peter's on a daily basis.

Once this ground work had been developed, it was then the task of the wonderfully talented and kind Robin McMorran (Tenor in the choir) and a new member of the Congregation at St Peter's to utilise his technical skill in raising our ideas to new life.

Robin, Jammie, Pru, the Ashlyn's students, Rowena, Tony and others have all given a huge amount of their spare time in helping us make this modern face of St Peter's attractive and welcoming.

To them and all who have supported this part of the information that we "put out" about St Peter's, thank you. Please visit the website, if you have any feedback, please be in touch with us, and I hope it helps to keep us all, near and far away, in some sort of touch with what's going on Sunday by Sunday. ***Fr John Pritchard***

See the new website at:

www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk



Congratulations to those confirmed in June 2011

The Bishop of Hertford presided over St Peter's Pentecost service on Sunday 12th June. At the service 32 young people and adults chose to be confirmed, with 3 adult baptisms. Even the Bishop was pleasantly surprised at the large numbers.

Congratulations are extended to Sophie Padmore, Richard Platt, Merlin Howells, Sophie Nash, Mark Igbineweka, Adam Brierley, Peter Smith, Cathy Smith, Thomas Nash, Katey Adderley, Holly Bowyer, Mark Bowyer, Duncan

Brigginshaw, Micheila Brigginshaw, Carolynne Charman, Luisa Clarke, Matthew Size, Pamela Dalgas, James Doyle, Zoe Doyle, Helen Hanbidge, Nick Hanbidge, Emma Harris, Helen Holmes-Higgin, Peter Horsley, Salli Humphries, Jonathan Liddle, Michelle Liddle, Jamie Matthews, Charlotte Tarpey, Georgie Wilkinson, Miles Wilkinson.



Bishop of Hertford

July Parish Diary

Mon 4th	10.30am	Victoria School Service, <i>St Peter's</i>
Mon 4th		Church Walk led by June & David Williamson, <i>All Saints</i>
Fri 8th	1:00pm	Cowper Society presents recital Fiona Duncan (violin) and Kevin Vockerodt (piano), <i>Lady Chapel, St Peter's</i>
Sat 9th	1:00pm	1-4pm. Barbeque at Wendover Woods, <i>All Saints</i>
Sat 16th	8:00am	ABC Prayer Breakfast, <i>All Saints</i>
Wed 20th		Day of Prayer, <i>All Saints</i>
Fri 22nd	9.30am	Victoria School Leavers Service, <i>St Peter's</i>
Fri 22nd	12:00nn	Thomas Coram End of Term Service, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sat 23rd	3:00pm	Cowper Society presents Music Workshop Groups' Charity Concert, <i>St Peter's</i>
Sun 31st		St Peter's Parish Picnic, <i>Thomas Coram School</i>
<i>All Parish Diary information can be found at www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk</i>		

Sunday Services	St Peter's		All Saints' - July	
	8:00am	Eucharist	3rd	10:00am Morning Worship
	9:30am	Sung Eucharist & Sunday School	10th	8:00am Holy Communion
	6:00pm	Evensong		10:00am Morning Worship: Action for Children Service
	Sun 10th 6:00pm	Choral Evensong	17th	10:00am Morning Worship with Holy Baptism
	<i>First Sunday in month Family Service at 9:30am</i>			4:00pm Circuit Farewell Service for Caroline Weaver
			24th	10:00am Holy Communion
			31st	10:00am Holy Communion
				4:00pm Service of Wholeness and Healing

Key Church Contacts

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

Further information available from our church websites:

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

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 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.

Weddings

14 May	Michael Ross Brooke and Emma Teresa Brooke (Wedding Blessing, <i>St Peter's</i>)
21 May	Ian Michael Edmonds and Kelly Marie Caesar-Gordon (<i>St Peter's</i>) Stephen Charles Dowling and Catherine Cairney Brooks (<i>St Peter's</i>)

Baptisms

8 May	Lara Micheila Bigginshaw (<i>St Peter's</i>)
14 May	Thomas Michael Brooke (<i>St Peter's</i>)
22 May	Annabel Barbara Lloyd-Evans (<i>St Peter's</i>) Kitty Annabel Martell (<i>St Peter's</i>) Amelia Hope Martell (<i>St Peter's</i>) Olivia Rose Martell (<i>St Peter's</i>)

Funerals

3 May	Dorothy May Barley (<i>St Peter's</i>)
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Two Oaks Pony Sanctuary

Ian Skillicorn visits a home for rescued animals that needs your help



The Two Oaks Pony Sanctuary in Darr's Lane cares for twenty rescue horses and ponies, and it desperately needs funds to stay open and continue providing a home for its residents. Owner Carol Houlihan explains that the sanctuary costs about £20,000 a year to run, and this year is facing a shortfall of about £6,000.

"We never say no to a horse or pony in need. We have rescued many ponies and horses that have suffered terrible neglect and abuse from their owners, and we have lovingly nursed them back to health and happiness. Our goal is simple: to treat the horses and ponies with the respect and love they deserve and give them a home

for the rest of their lives."

I spent an afternoon at the sanctuary and met inspirational Carol and the lovely horses and ponies, each with their own sad story. Here, Carol tells just two:

Ben's story

Ben (pictured above) is a 24 year old thoroughbred who has been at the sanctuary since the beginning of this year. We were called to a yard at the end of January and found Ben standing in a field: cold, shaking and very underweight. It was said that his owner had not been up to feed or look after him, he was a case of neglect. We removed him and brought



him back to the sanctuary. We put rugs on him and gave him a small feed with plenty of hay, the poor boy was starving, just skin and bones. Ben stayed in for 4 weeks, with walks around the yard. He had a large net of hay and 4 feeds a day and it wasn't long before he was gaining weight. Ben will soon be starting an exercise programme which will help him regain the muscle he has lost and hopefully then he will continue to improve.

Billy's story

Billy (pictured above) is a twenty-something Shetland Pony. His background is uncertain but we are led to believe he was a children's ride and drive. Billy had been shot in one eye, resulting in blindness. He is now also losing the sight in his other eye. We have retired him so that he can enjoy the rest of his life.

Help Ben, Billy and their friends

So how can you help keep Two Oaks open and able to provide a loving home for Ben, Billy and their friends? There are many ways, from booking riding lessons at the best rates around to booking a birthday party for your child, to adopting a pony or sparing a few hours to help with the everyday running of the sanctuary. You could also make a one-off donation or attend one of their fundraisers. There will be a Family Fun Day on Saturday 10th September and we'll have more news about that in September's Your Berkhamsted.

For more information please call Carol on 01442 300872 or email littleponies@virginmedia.com *yB*

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***Mother's Union* by Margaret Burbidge**

Akoko, Lusaka, Christ the King, Grafton and Armidale. These are far away dioceses in Africa and Australia that are linked with St Albans diocese through the MU Wave of Prayer. From 6-10th July each year, members throughout the world are thinking about and praying for these dioceses. Each branch in St Albans diocese is given a time. Members all over the world join us to help make an unbroken chain of prayer through each day. In Berkhamsted we will meet on 7th July at 12.30pm.

Through our prayers we share in the lives of the members in our linked dioceses. We are all concerned with Christian care for families, but the focus of this will vary. In Akoko, Nigeria, MU is involved in building a girls' hostel at the University in Akinga, while in Lusaka, Zambia, skills such as gardening, poultry keeping and knitting bring benefits to members and

their families. In Christ the King, South Africa, MU is caring for street children and orphans, and AIDS patients in the hospice. In Grafton and Armidale in northern New South Wales, there is concern for people who have experienced disastrous floods, and MU's work includes Parenting Programmes.

Members in these dioceses will be praying for us, including our work with Child Contact Centres and Away From It All Holidays.

Prayer is at the heart of all that MU does, and our turn in the Wave of Prayer is special. To remember and pray for our members in diverse places overseas is a privilege, but it is humbling to remember they meet to pray for us and some will have walked many miles along dusty roads to do so. *yB*

***Oxfam turns £2 a week into seaweed* by Audrey Hope**

Zafia's family used to have just one small meal of porridge and rice a day. Now they have rice, corn, vegetables and fish and her children no longer suffer from malnutrition and its attendant sickness.

The difference? Support from Oxfam through its £2 a month scheme made it possible for Zafia to start her own seaweed farm and the family from a small fishing community in Indonesia no longer has to worry about monsoons making fishing too dangerous and cutting off their

meagre income.

11,000 people have benefited from Oxfam support in the area.

50p a week on a regular basis can make all the difference to people living on the margins. It's not a lot to ask.

To donate call 0300 200 1300 or visit www.oxfam.org.uk/amazing *yB*



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Raising money for Petertide Fair

Julian Dawson talks to Steve Birch about his sponsored triathlon

Steve Birch is being sponsored in a competitive triathlon in support of the Petertide Fair charities.

What event are you running in?

It's the 'Alpe Triathlon' which is in its 6th year. The event takes place on 28th July and consists of a 1.2km swim followed by a 30km bike ride and finally a 7km run.

I'm no linguist, but Alpe sounds rather high?

Correct! The word 'Alpe' refers to Alpe d'Huez, well known to many people as a ski resort in south-east France. However, Alpe d'Huez is famous in the Tour de France, with 21 hairpin bends. The run part of the event takes place at 1850m in the thinner air of the resort of Alpe d'Huez itself. The temperatures during the event are expected to be 35 to 40 degrees Celsius.

How long have you been competing in triathlons for?

I took part in my first two triathlons in 2007, mostly as a result of a bet with some colleagues at work. I did another in 2008 and then sadly allowed myself to return to my normal couch-potato existence. For me, this year's triathlon has been an opportunity to shake myself out



of that and also represents a great way to raise money for charity through association with the annual Petertide Fair in Berkhamsted.

Are you taking part on your own?

There will be 5 of us undertaking the event, all friends

and former work colleagues. I'll be the only one of us officially raising funds for the Petertide Fair though.

Steve, I hate to mention it, but you've developed a limp.

On the last day of May I tore my calf muscle on a training run and so frustratingly I'm now into a 4 to 6 week period of rest and recuperation at the time when I'm supposed to be ramping up the training effort. But I'm confident I'll be recovered by about the first week in July and then it'll be a case of doing whatever training I can between then and the race to make final preparations.

How can people sponsor you?

I've set up a page on the 'Just Giving' web site - search for 'Petertide Fair' and/or 'Steve Birch' to find the relevant page and make online donations quickly and easily. I will also have a more traditional sponsorship form for those less inclined to using the internet! *yB*

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Get involved in Your Berkhamsted!

The editor of Your Berkhamsted is actively seeking new contributors for the magazine.

Did you know that everyone who works on bringing Your Berkhamsted to you each month is a volunteer? We would extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us, whether you would like to contribute on a regular basis or just write a one-off article.

Features

We are always interested in discussing ideas for features about Berkhamsted life. These could be about the town's history, interesting modern day developments or local people of note (past or present).

Local groups

Bringing news from local groups to our readers is an important function of Your Berkhamsted. If you belong to a local group please let us know about your latest news and events. Please consider sending

us an article about what your group does. Articles should be 500 to 900 words in length.

Fiction

Are you a budding writer of fiction or poetry? We want to showcase local writing and are looking for poems of up to 200 words and short stories between 500 and 1000 words.

Arts and culture

Would you like to write a review of an arts event taking place in or nearby to Berkhamsted? Let us know!

The last word

The last word is available for readers to send in approx. 500 words on a topic of their choice, and one that may stimulate debate in further issues.

Please email the editor for more details at editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk. *yB*

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Berkhamsted School has submitted a planning application to develop part of Kitchener's Field, near the castle. Plans shared by the school at a consultation meeting late last year showed that the development will involve levelling part of the valley, installation of an artificial hockey pitch, the erection of fencing to up to 4 metres high and the installation of floodlighting. Kitchener's Field is in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural

Beauty, and the Green Belt.

Once registered, the plans will be available to view online on the Dacorum Borough Council website (www.dacorum.gov.uk) in the planning section, and at Berkhamsted Civic Centre during weekday opening hours.

Comments on the application can be submitted during the consultation period over the next couple of weeks only.

Castle Hill Association

The Bridgewater Bikers



One town, one orchestra...One bike, two bikers...One thousand kilometres...and several thousand pounds to raise!

Many of you have come to appreciate the quality and musicality of our very fine local orchestra, the Bridgewater Sinfonia. You may know that, in the climate of cost-cutting, its funding will be cut from next season onwards – a loss to the orchestra of several thousand pounds per year.

Already this fine group of musicians relies heavily upon the goodwill of many of its players to keep its costs down, and on the generosity of its loyal supporters. In the future the choice for the orchestra is stark: either somehow lower costs further or – in the spirit of the Big Society – raise more money to make up the shortfall in grants.

Here's where the Bridgewater Bikers come in. Two Friends of the Sinfonia and members of the Chiltern Chamber Choir - which sings annually with the orchestra and which is touring in the south of France this summer - propose to dust down their beloved old tandem and cycle to the concerts in the Pyrenees, raising money for every one of the thousand kilometres of this epic ride.

And here's what you can do. Please sponsor Alison and Peter McMunn - the Bridgewater Bikers - on their long journey. 1p per kilometre will cost you just £10, 5p per kilometre a healthy £50.

Whatever you can give will be gratefully accepted. You don't have to do the hard work – the Bridgewater Bikers will do this for you, all the way from St Malo on 7th August to Perpignan, arriving a fortnight later. The target is to raise £4000, equivalent to one year's lost grant!

The local beekeeper

Crispin Baker continues his monthly beekeeping diary

July, this is it the moment we've all been waiting for, because July is the month when most of the summer crop of honey is harvested by the bees. All the beekeeper's efforts

throughout the year hopefully culminate now in having a colony; developed, healthy and ready to work bringing in the floral crop.

Blackberry is our favourite and is abundant around our local Potten End apiary, the bees love it and we can crop well on it, given the weather - so spare that bramble break gardeners. Other good sources of nectar available now are clover, field beans and dandelion to name but a few. So how do the bees do it?

Foraging bees suck nectar up adding an enzyme as they go, and store it inside their honey stomach. Nectar is only 20 to 40% sugars and the enzyme helps to commence the gradual change from a watery solution to honey which is about 80% sugar. When full the bee flies back to the hive and disgorges the contents of its honey stomach to a young house bee.

May I at this point please request that parents do not describe this as bee sick – your children will never eat honey again!



The house bees add more enzyme and store the nectar in empty cells on the wax comb, whereby through the natural heat of the hive and some judicial fanning of wings the bees drive off the water content until the solution turns to honey (about 80% sugar). Honey is

described as being hygroscopic i.e. it naturally absorbs water, so as soon as the cell is full it is capped with a thin layer of wax ready for long term storage as stores for the coming winter.

Before honey is taken from the hives we need to check that the bees have ripened the honey i.e. they've driven off the surplus water. If it's capped then it's ripe, but some cells are not full and we can check these by giving the wax comb a brisk shake, whereby droplets of honey falling out would indicate unripe honey. Judging when honey is ripe is an important skill for the beekeeper as unripe honey will start to ferment, and if already jarred up the honey will fizz out from under the lid, make a mess and taste most peculiar!

That's all folks, next time we'll hear about how the beekeeper robs all that honey.

Bee Happy!

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The last word with Norman Cutting

The intention of this article is to point out some of the things that happen in the town whilst you are either looking the other way or sitting on the train gazing wistfully at our once proud looking totem pole who now looks more like a chap in a miner's hat, although at the moment if you come down Castle Street you will need to look carefully to see it.

However, I digress (as usual), as it was this event which started me thinking that what else I had missed was the painting bright yellow of the railings at the bottom of Swing Gate Lane. As those around Swing Gate, Greenway and Bridgewater Schools know, County have run out of ideas and decided that children should be protected from their parents. We have had the bump fitted, the pavement altered, the railings installed and signs erected and little blue and yellow marks painted down my end of town and when, in mid May, the painting started on the High Street railings turning them from really mundane railings opposite a used car lot with wonderful banner signage (conservation area – planning required etc.) into bright yellow ones, what can one say.

It so happened just after spotting this wonderful sight (3 grumpy old men wondering why!) I had dusted my passport and we were off to the Peak District with our caravan for what was promised a lovely calm warm weekend. Stupid boy! Millions spent on a new meteorological facility in Exeter just

proved that money doesn't actually improve matters as it poured with rain, it blew gales even to the extent that high sided vehicles and caravans were recommended not to travel unless really necessary. You didn't have to tell me twice!

We got back and spotted the newly painted railings and looked forward to our new ones being a similar garish colour. Sadly it was not to be. Hang on, what are those silvery looking poles? I will investigate the next day. Next day comes and I find we now have 3 new lamp-posts next to the original ones. My uncle at the other end of the road now tells me that none work since they were installed, even though several have been replaced in the past couple of years due to none working. I don't know, I go away for just a few days and look what happens. I dare not go and see if the wall between Mill Street and the canal is still standing, the lights in the Velvet Lawn changing rooms turned out yet (currently 3+ weeks), Rectory Lane street sign and resident pot hole (currently 6 years) are OK and commuter parking reached the farm entrance in New Road yet after the excellent idea of painting a few yellow lines.

By the way, the Manor Street development is coming along nicely, pity about residents who used and needed the facilities offered before, but housing must take priority. *JB*

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