

the magazine for town and parish

your **Berkhamsted**



Enjoy the Chilterns Countryside Festival

Discover fossils in the font

Celebrate the Graham Greene Festival

Join the Berkhamsted litter pickers

September 2011

50p

From the Editor August 2011



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

Welcome to the September issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

This month we report on two festivals that celebrate two important aspects of Berkhamsted's identity - our countryside and our literary heritage as the birthplace and home town of Graham Greene.

There are many opportunities to get involved in local life in our town. In this issue you can learn more about the work of The Hospice of St Francis, Berkhamsted Country Market, The Friends of Rectory Lane Cemetery and Berkhamsted Litter Pickers. Of course, *Your Berkhamsted* is also always keen to welcome those of you who would like to contribute in some way, so do get in touch.

Also this month, Dan Parry takes us on a journey from the distant past to the present, Judith Limbert looks back on her time as Chair of the Petertide Fair, Frank Norman tells us about some surprising garden guests and Crispin Baker continues his monthly beekeeping diary.

I'm delighted to welcome Joanne Lloyd Davies and Sam Limbert to the expanding *Your Berkhamsted* team. Joanne is our new Treasurer and Sam will be responsible for layout and design.

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 September to November's issues, please refer to page 31.

Photo credits: Back cover: Blue tit by Frank Norman

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Your Berkhamsted Leader by Canon Anthony Lathe



By the end of this month a good number of people will have become members of the clergy of the Church of England. In St Alban's diocese, nine

will have joined the ranks this year.

I recall, 50 years ago, walking down the street on my first day dressed in clerical collar and black from head to foot (as one did in those days). How curiously different an experience it was from the week before! Some complete strangers smiled, others greeted me warmly; some looked embarrassed and others looked away as if I had some dreadful deformity.

We have some idea of what those new clergy will be doing. We expect they will take church services, they will preach sermons trying to help people understand what the Christian faith is about and how to apply it, they will visit people who are ill or dying, they will often come to be in charge of a local church with all its organisations, they will take weddings and funerals, and a host of other things in both church and community.

What are clergy *for* is finer question than asking what they do, and is one which vicars are always asking themselves. I see them as representatives, but without selling anything!

First, obviously a vicar represents the church. Wherever he or she goes it signifies the involvement or interest of the church. It means they go to places where they would not be permitted or welcome as a private person. Visiting people at home or in hospital is an example. It also means what they say or do is carefully

monitored by others as they make a judgement on the church as a whole. The church goes through a careful selection procedure and training to try to get its representatives right.

Secondly, and I trust this does not sound too grand, a vicar represents God. Wherever a vicar is there is a definite reminder of the spiritual dimension of life with all the significance that that involves. Most of the time people seem glad to be reminded of God being where they are, although occasionally it is a bit difficult and embarrassing. A vicar is not a social worker or a psychotherapist, but people can talk to vicars as they can talk to God knowing that what they say will not be passed on or even notes made (except with permission), and they will not be judged. For example, because of the time I was at work, I spent hours with people coming to the end of their lives who had fought in the world wars. Many of the experiences were so bad that it seemed important to tell someone, not family, informally and confidentially before passing on.

After 50 years I have a head full of memories ranging from sickening horror to ecstatic joy. It has been a privilege being able to go to places, meet all kinds of people and have conversations I would never have had as a private person. It leaves a mixture of joy and sadness at the human condition. I am glad there are still plenty joining up to represent both the church (worth belonging to) and the importance of spiritual matters (worth hanging on to) in an increasingly secular age. I hope you are glad too!

yB

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Around the town

The latest news from around Berkhamsted

The Percy Birtchnell Memorial Prize

The Percy Birtchnell Memorial Prize took place this year for the tenth year. Financed by the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum

Society, two prizes are given to Year 4 children of Victoria First School in memory of founder member Percy Birtchnell, who first became interested in local history while still at Victoria Boys' School. The prizes are given for projects based on National Curriculum work but carried out in the children's own time. This year the topic was 'Local Heroes.' Seven children submitted projects.

Prizes were awarded to Jonathan Below for his project 'Thomas Coram' and to Ben Pierleoni for his project 'Charles de Gaulle is my hero.' Phoebe Day was very highly commended for her project 'Paul Beard – a local hero,' and Mary Robinson for her projects, 'Thomas Coram' and 'Thomas Bourne'.

Recital and concert

A recital and a concert are presented by The Cowper Society at St Peter's church this month.

Saturday 3rd September at 7.30pm:
Berkhamsted Choral Society with
Chorleywood Choral Society, Peace and



Passion: A Choral Celebration.
Selections from Messiah (Handel) and other English anthems including Zadok the Priest. Conductor Graham Wili. Tickets: £13, Seniors £11, Student & Dacorum Card £6, U16s free. Box Office 07500 431643 or from

Cole Flatt & Partners.

Saturday 17th September at 7.30pm:
Bridgewater Sinfonia – Beethoven
Overture: Egmont; Schubert
Symphony No.8 'Unfinished'; Elgar
Enigma Variations. Conducted by Adrian
Davis. Tickets: £15, under 18s free.
Season Tickets: £45 for 4 concerts.
Tickets from Aitchisons or
www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk or tel:
01442 875945.

Raising money for Phakamisa

Congratulations to Jonathan Gordon on reaching John O'Groats on day 19 of his epic bike ride from Land's End - a distance of over 800miles! Just one man, his bike and his one man tent and YHA card. Well done on raising so much money for Phakamisa. Check out his daily diary on the Phakamisa group on Facebook - and it's not too late to donate.

(continues on page 7)

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Heritage Open Days

For a number of years the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society has staged Heritage Open Days as part of the nationally-sponsored Open Days, providing opportunities to visit and enjoy guided tours of local buildings which are not normally open in this way.

Many local residents will believe that they already know their Berkhamsted and that they have nothing new to learn, but behind familiar façades there is much hidden history. An added bonus of these Heritage Open Days is that they are all free. Berkhamsted's Heritage Open Days are from 8th to 11th September and include tours of the Castle, Berkhamsted School Old Hall and Chapel, St Peter's Church and Court House.

Further details of the HODs on Society's website, www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk and on www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Oxfam Children's Wear Event

Don't forget the Oxfam Children's Wear Event on Friday 9th September from 9am to 11.30am in Berkhamsted Civic Centre. An important difference this time is that credit cards will be accepted but not cheques.

At first glance it is just a plastic bucket but examine the Oxfam bucket more closely and it has some unique features. At the base there is a small tap to make the flow more controllable. When every drop counts, loss needs to be kept to a minimum. This is also aided by the well-fitting lid. The bucket itself is very light to minimize the loads women customarily carry on their heads, and at the centre of the base, where there is usually a sharp

point, the knob has been smoothed away for comfort. The buckets can be stacked inside one another for ease of transport and at a cost of just £2.35 each Oxfam expects to distribute thousands of them in the drought-stricken regions of East Africa where water is being trucked in to distribution points. Water trucking is an expensive operation and the Children's Wear Event aims to raise thousands of pounds to help meet the need.

The excellent clothes, toys and equipment offer great bargains which will help family budgets as well as bringing relief to desperate families overseas.

Services

A welcome service for the Revd Rachael Hawkins, the new Methodist minister for Berkhamsted and Tring, will be held at All Saints', Shrublands Road on Sunday 11th September at 4pm.

A Service of Wholeness and Healing will be held at All Saints', Shrublands Road on Sunday 25th September at 4pm. All are welcome.

A Better World is Possible

Bruce Nixon's book, *A Better World is Possible*, will be published next month. Baroness Helena Kennedy QC says of the book: "This book will inspire, challenge you and make sense of how the system works. It's your handbook for a bottom up revolution. Read it and play your part." Bruce will be signing copies of the book in Waterstones on Saturday 19th November followed by a charity event on Thursday 24th November. Tickets for the event will be available from Waterstones. More information next month. *JB*

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Step up and step back from a 100 ft building!

A daredevil former Territorial Army recruit has signed up to take part in the Hospice of St Francis's abseil next month.

John Walker, 64, who suffered from a stroke in 2002, decided to relive some of the skills he learnt training with the TA almost 25 years ago and take the plunge for the charity. The former Kodak employee, who lives in Boxmoor, spent time abseiling in army-style camps whilst on treks and mountain training exercises many years ago.

Says John: "It was such a great challenge at the time I thought well, why not do it again - my age shouldn't stop me and the fact I am slightly disabled after my stroke means I just see this as an even bigger challenge. I like supporting charities and the Hospice of St Francis is a local organisation that needs our support. This event brought back memories and I am getting sponsorship from friends already so that is great."

The Hospice of St Francis is looking for volunteers to literally 'go over the top for the hospice' and abseil 100 foot down the Dixons Retail building in Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead, all for a good cause of course!

Registration costs just £25 with a minimum sponsorship requirement of



Abseil training

£100 - that's just 10 friends sponsoring you £10 each. (Under 18's need to pay just £20 to register and raise a minimum of £50).

Community Fundraiser Emma Day commented: "John's entry just

shows that anyone can take part in this fantastic event, either as a personal challenge or just as a fun thing to do whilst raising sponsorship at the same time. Last year we hosted this event for the first time and were thrilled with the amount of people that took part. It raised more than £15,500 and this year we are hoping to smash that target. So if you are planning a family day out with a difference, a team building event or simply fancy a challenge before the year is out, then sign up!"

All the money raised will go towards helping patients and their families coping with a life limiting illness. 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 Hempstead, St Albans and surrounding villages.

To sign up or for further information call 01442 869555 or email fundraising@stfrancis.org.uk. You can also register online by going to www.stfrancis.org.uk/abseil2011reg

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Fossils in the font

Dan Parry takes us on a very long journey home

Life begins in the font. Cleansing a new life is a ritual soaked in the notion of rebirth. And nowhere is rebirth more celebrated than the font in St Peter's. Children baptised in the marble masterpiece find themselves confronted by hundreds of fossils of mysterious sea creatures, more than 450 million years old. They are the first act in a breath-taking story of the rebirth of thousands of ocean animal species wiped out by global extinction events. As fonts go, it's not a bad introduction to life.

The story starts with a bit of red tape. Not the stuff of town councils, but actual tape. Imagine a length of tape 125 yards long, (a little more than twice the length of the Church), representing the length of time the Earth has existed, (an inch represents a million years). In strolling forward to a point a third of a way along, more than a billion years pass in the blink of an eye. Here life is already eking out a living – microscopic cells loiter in primitive oceans promising bigger and better things to come. Admittedly the bigger and better things take a while to turn up, so let's wander on until we're just 14 yards from the end of the tape.

Here, 450 million years back from today, (the Ordovician, in geological terms), the Earth is awash with warm seas lapping at the shores of unfamiliar land-masses. Berkhamsted's spot, perched on a sausage-shaped slab of land elegantly named Avalonia, is on its way north from a point on the edge of the south pole. Yet even now it is still somewhere south of the equator. Wales is coming along for the

ride but Scotland, geologically detached, is off making merry elsewhere. Ancient forms of shellfish are everywhere, their remains preserved in soft sediments that will eventually transform into marble. Some of these same shellfish shall live once more, reborn in a new form in Berkhamsted's font.

Strolling again along the tape, let's pause this time seven yards from the end. Here we meet with disaster! Resilient as the shellfish are, thousands of species are wiped out in a vast extinction event – or events – 250 million years ago. The so-called 'great dying' claimed an astonishing 90% of all species of life, maybe more. Some of the shellfish later evolved into related species, but many did not – their kind permanently erased from life by poisonous seas and a toxic atmosphere, perhaps the result of volcanism.

Wandering on to a point just five feet from the end of the tape we find that Berkhamsted is safely tucked away in the northern hemisphere. It might feel like we're home and dry, but gentle reader here there are a whole chocolate-box assortment of things to be terrified of. Firstly, colossal dinosaurs are waiting to nip at your toes. Tyrannosaurus might not live in these parts but in previous years plenty of other dinosaurs did. Secondly, the reason they're no longer around in our neck of the woods is that Berkhamsted's spot is drowned beneath a warm, shallow sea. Here, in the late Cretaceous, billions

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of micro-organisms, bedecked in calcite, soak up sunlight amid local temperatures significantly warmer than today. Their minute white plates later form thick layers of chalk that even today gleam as brightly as the sun that once nourished them, as if the Cretaceous had ended just yesterday. Which geologically speaking, it did. And what an ending!

Sailors on the sea above what is now the High Street would have seen a truly amazing sight. Billions of specks of rock silently charging through the atmosphere brought death with them on a spectacular scale. Hurlled into the sky after a meteoroid bigger than Mount Everest smashed into shallow waters off modern Mexico, the rock particles were almost flung into space. Now, racing back down through the atmosphere, they surround the world within an hour, warming up as they smash through the air until nothing can withstand their collective heat. Ground temperatures soar to 300 degrees Centigrade and anything unable to hide in soil or water doesn't stand a chance. Cockroaches, crocodiles, seabirds and turtles do OK. Tyrannosaurus is grilled, and over time the over-sized dinosaurs give way to the mammals, (including, locally, rhinoceros and mammoth).

We've come a long way, 125 yards in fact, nearly. We ourselves emerge less than a quarter of an inch from the end of the tape, pretty hopeless really. The quietly evolving shellfish had cracked the secret of life hundreds of millions of years earlier. And by surviving all manner of epoch-defining disasters they prove that life is capable of rebirth even after the

most trying of circumstances. It's a fact written in the rocks, and nowhere more clearly than in our very own font.

JB

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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).

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.

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

Berkhamsted Country Market

Eileen Heylin celebrates 50 years of the Berkhamsted Country Market

This summer Berkhamsted Country Market celebrated 50 years of trading on Berkhamsted market. Members donned boaters and gave away cake to customers and passers-by. Despite the dreadful rain that day many people tried and liked the cakes and one customer even presented a birthday card saying the Market members were fabulous at fifty.

Berkhamsted Country Market has a stall on the High Street on Saturday mornings and is an established part of the market scene with a loyal band of regular customers who often enjoy a joke with the ladies. Members are all local people selling local produce such as home-made cakes, savouries and preserves as well as eggs and fruit and vegetables from their gardens. Plants are also very popular with customers in the spring and summer

months. All produce is freshly made and contains no preservatives.

Berkhamsted Country Market started out in 1961 as the Women's Institute Produce Market selling home-made and home-grown produce. By the time the stall started in Berkhamsted the idea of the WI selling local produce was already over 40 years old.

In 1919 a WI market was set up at Lewes in Sussex, it was a collaboration between local WIs and was seen as a way of increasing food production from gardens and allotments. Initially the 'Lewes Women's Institute Produce Market' sold members' produce but it soon expanded to include small-holders, ex-service men and anyone who could grow produce or cook

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and could afford the one shilling joining fee. One shilling then was equivalent to one week's wages for farm labourers and it still costs one shilling to join now - 5p. The idea soon spread and by 1961 there were about 400 WI markets selling in village halls and local markets up and down the country.

In 1995 the WI became a charity and since WI Country Markets were a business, making money for their members, they could no longer be part of the WI charity. Eventually the 'WI' part of the name was dropped and they are now simply known as Country Markets.

There are 11 Country Markets in Hertfordshire. Berkhamsted, in common with all the others, is a co-operative run by

and for the shareholders. They are regulated by the head office of the organisation based in Chesterfield.

To celebrate the big birthday the Berkhamsted Country Market have purchased a smart new stall which is much tidier and easier to erect than their old one. Being a little smaller not so much stock can be on show but there is plenty more behind the counter.

With the current interest in good local food and using fewer food miles, the Country Market fully expect to last another 50 years.

For more information or if you are interested in joining this local food co-operative please contact Eileen Heylin on 01442 255862 or email countrymarket@hotmail.co.uk. yB

Judith Limbert

Julian Dawson talks to the outgoing Chair of the Petertide Fair

Steve Birch's sponsored triathlon up the Alpe d'Huez on 28th July has brought the Petertide Fair events for 2011 to a literally breathtaking end. In her last year as Chair, I caught up with Judith Limbert to discuss her thoughts on the most successful year yet.

You are coming to the end of your three year tenure as Chair of the Petertide Fair. You must be delighted with this year's record total.

I am. In the 30th year of the Fair it is great to achieve our best total. And the two charities can complete projects as a result of a great community effort. We had loads of people running a lot of different events, showing generosity with their money, time and talents.

During the last three years the Petertide Fair has grown into a series of events with an identifiable brand. Would you say that was your proudest achievement?

I would definitely say that this was a greatest achievement as a committee. Although people knew all about the fair, we have been able to make Petertide an ongoing event throughout the year helping to make St Peter's the centre of the town.

What have you enjoyed most about your time as Chair?

It has to have been our committee meetings. They have been so sociable. I strongly believe that if you volunteer for something you have to be able to enjoy it too. And it has been a lot of fun.

What have you found most frustrating?

It has to be not knowing what the 'usual' is! After three years I still don't know. But I have long since learnt not to let it bother me.

Do you think St Peter's change of focus in outward giving has changed the way the Fair is seen?

I definitely think that making Petertide the focus of outward giving has changed people's attitude within the church community. People are so more committed to it and that has given it more of an impetus.

What advice do you have for your successor?

I have ten top tips.

-Always carry your Petertide Fair bag with pride.

-If someone says they'll do the usual, say thank you and don't ask questions.

-Open the Pimms stall on fair day early.

-Make sure you have an empty garage for all the donations.

-Acquire a very large note book.

-Have a copy of the parish directory permanently to hand.

-Always serve alcohol at committee meetings.

-Never be afraid to stand up in church and make a fool of yourself to spread the word.

-Always remember there is a huge wealth of generous and enthusiastic people to call upon.

-ENJOY IT!

Thank you Judith, I can't think of a better note to end on. Your tenure has been inspirational, rewarding and a lot of fun.

yB

A short history of the Tuesday Club

Fiona Powell takes a look back

Tuesday Club, formerly St. Peter's and All Saints Tuesday Club, is a women's fellowship group which was inaugurated in February 1973 under the chairmanship of Mary Payne-Cook, wife of the then Priest-in-Charge at All Saints Church, some members having previously belonged to a group called "Young Wives" which had disbanded.

Due to rebuilding work at the old Court House the club originally met in various venues, at All Saints Church Hall, the house of a member on Castle Street, and finally in September 1981, in the newly appointed Court House where ever since we have held our meetings on the first Tuesday evening of the month.

The speakers at our meetings are very varied and we trawl many sources to find them. At our birthday meetings in May we welcome visitors from other ladies' church groups in the town, although sadly these groups are now rather depleted due to closures for various reasons, advancing age, infirmity, etc.

For a few years one of our summer meetings saw us engaged in trying to tidy up the old cemetery on Rectory Lane, later changed this to brass cleaning and candle grease removal in the church, and then in 1994, for a few years, spring cleaning the Court House. Times move on and these chores are now done by others.

Christian Aid has been one of the charities we have always supported. After their annual December Fair ceased, where we ran a home made confectionery stall, we

now help at one of the Lent lunches held in the Court House serving home made soups, crusty bread and butter and fruit crumbles.

Our most important fund raising activity is the cake stall we run at the Petertide Fair. Starting with humble beginnings under the old tree, now cut down, on the church green, our regular place now is in the church. With many contributions of baking from the congregation the profit from this stall has increased every year helping to swell the total profit from the Fair.

The highlight of the Tuesday Club is our December meeting when we have our traditional Christmas dinner to which we welcome gallant husbands who help serve drinks and set up the tables, the Rector and his wife and other clergy. A hot meal is cooked by the committee, various desserts made by members, and an entertainer finishes off the evening.

The Tuesday Club is now in its 38th year and is well established in the town. We look forward to the future, and the Club being known as a welcoming, friendly group, invites all ladies of the Town to join us. For further information contact the Club Secretary – telephone 01442 864532.

Local groups

News from local groups is an important function of Your Berkhamsted. If you belong to one, please let us know about your latest news and events. Please send us an article between 500 and 900 words
Email editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk.

Thank You from Fr John Pritchard

Dear Friends,
Thank you for the tremendous send-off and farewell that you gave me at our Patronal Festival and Parish Lunch. My last couple of weeks with you were very much a whirlwind of services, suppers, lunches, cards, comments, words of affection and a few words of warning for this new period in my life. I have valued them all, even though often, I thought you were talking about someone else. But thank you for coming out and wishing me so well. Our Patronal Festival Mass for St Peter was outstanding, and I stand by every word of thanks I offered to you and to Father Michael, that was before Mr Pearce rendered me speechless. To complement that Service, it was fitting and amazing to eat so well and with so many friends. So thank you to the Catering Team, to Liz Jackson and to Kate Perera for the biggest cake ever. It took me three weeks... but it was delicious! Never mind the gap... hmmm! Your gifts to me have already fulfilled their intention of being used, well and often. The Cassocks have been worn at High Mass, Low Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer and of course the odd Buckingham Palace Garden Party... Oh how I love London! It is impossible to

compare the two places but I feel as happy here as I was with you in Berkhamsted. For that, I am extremely grateful. I know that I am blessed by your prayers and

friendships, and by the new encouragement of the people and clergy in this parish.

I very much look forward to welcoming any of you, should you be passing, should you need a Mass, or simply a moments rest in London. I hope we will continue in friendship, and thanksgiving for all that has been, and for all that is to come.

I remain in friendship, with love and prayers, Fr. John Pritchard



**For further information All Saints,
St Margaret Street, London, see:**

www.allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk

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.

The Revd Rachael Hawkins , 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.

Sunday Services

St Peter's

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

 Choir return to Church service in September, including monthly Choral Evensong

First Sunday in month Family Service at 9:30am

All Saints—September

4th 10:00am Holy Communion
 11th 10:00am Holy Communion
 4:00pm Welcome Rev'd Rachael Hawkins
 18th 10:00am Morning Worship with Holy Baptism
 25th 8:00am Holy Communion
 10:00am Holy Communion
 4:00pm Healing Service

September Parish Diary

Sat 3rd	7.30pm	Cowper Society presents Berkhamsted Choral Society concert in St Peter's
Wed 7th		Church Walk, led by Eddie Cuthbert (<i>All Saints</i>)
Sat 10th	10.00am-6.00pm	Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust Sponsored Bike N Hike
Sun 11th	4.00pm	Welcome Service for Rev'd Rachael Hawkins, <i>All Saints</i>
Sat 17th	7.30pm	Cowper Society presents Bridgewater Sinfonia concert in St Peter's
Thu 22nd	8.00pm	All Saints Council
Sat 24th	8.00pm	Barn Dance, <i>All Saints</i>
Sun 25th	4.00pm	Healing Service, <i>All Saints</i>
Wed 28th	7.00pm	Parish and Team Evening Pilgrimage to St Alban's Abbey

Parish Diary information can be found at www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk

Weddings

15 July Gregory Robert Jackson and Nicola Ruth Birdsell (*St Peter's*)

Baptisms

24 July Olivia Evangeline Marks (*St Peter's*)
Oliver Whitaker (*St Peter's*)
Oscar Isaac Charles Dowley (*St Peter's*)
Cerys Alice Sarah John (*St Peter's*)
Reuben George John Beswick (*St Peter's*)

31 July Jessica Emma Turvey (*St Peter's*)

Funerals

26 July Mark Dell (*St Peter's*)

Registers

Celebrating the Chilterns Countryside

Cathy Rose, from the Chilterns Conservation Board , invites us to celebrate the countryside this month



The Chilterns Conservation Board and National Trust will be bringing countryside fun to the magnificent Ashridge Estate on Sunday 18th September. Mouth-watering local produce stalls, fascinating craft displays, forestry demonstrations and children's activities are just some of the things to discover.

The Chilterns Countryside Festival has been running for five years and has up to 100 stalls showcasing the various foods, crafts, industries and wildlife associated with the Chilterns countryside and the key word for the event is 'local'.

The Chilterns counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire are home to a huge variety of food producers, artists, crafters and environmental organisations and this event is dedicated to them. Unlike other craft and food events, where exhibitors could have come from anywhere in the country, over 90% the exhibitors at the Chilterns Countryside Festival come from within 25 miles of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so visitors to the show really are buying local. Over 30 food stands will be selling local

produce ranging from cookies, cakes and cheese to preserves, pies and poultry to take home. If you're feeling peckish, you can tuck into a wide range of hot food including a hog roast, steak sandwiches, barbequed beef, chicken and even goat burgers, plus a range of

vegetarian options. Thirsty? You can try apple juice pressed in Chesham, wine from a vineyard in Frithsdon and ales brewed in Tring, or just nice cup of tea or coffee!

Craft stalls will include turned wood and walking sticks, willow weaving, ceramics, stained and decorated glass, jewellery, cards, photographs, repurposed clothing and accessories and even scarecrows! Many of the stall holders will be



demonstrating their skills, and in some cases, you can even have a go.

A feature of the event that always draws crowds is the woodland industry area where woodland contractors will be operating sawmills, wood chippers and other machinery. A chainsaw carver will be creating rustic works of art and the traditional craft of hedge-laying will be demonstrated. The National Trust's foresters will be on hand to answer questions and there will be an opportunity to buy wooden planters and raised beds made from wood grown on the Ashridge Estate.

Fifteen local environmental organisations will have stands on the day, so there will be plenty of chances to find out about the fantastic range of work going on locally to conserve and promote the countryside and wildlife of the Chiltern hills.

There's plenty for kids to do with craft activities, face painting, story telling and a chance to have a go at archery, and for any budding Ray Mears or Bear Grylls, there will be interactive demonstrations of bushcraft skills, using both modern and Stone Age techniques.

Live animals are always a firm favourite with children and adults alike, and this year is no exception, with ferret racing, owls, sheep shearing demonstrations and the ever-popular heavy horse.

Graeme Cannon, Property Manager of the National Trust's Ashridge Estate, says, "This is a fantastic opportunity to see the range work that goes on in the Chilterns countryside. We want to give people the chance to try local, seasonal food which comes direct from the producers and discover the huge variety of craft that is created here."



The Chilterns Countryside Festival is open from 11am to 4pm and takes place in the field behind the Ashridge Visitors Centre. Admission is £3.00 for adults, with children under 16 free (though they must be accompanied by an adult). There will be a small charge for some activities. Free parking is available in the meadow beside the events field. Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on a lead.

For more information, call the National Trust Ashridge Visitor Centre on 01442 851227 or the Chilterns Conservation Board on 01844 355 506.

Arts and culture

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

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Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

Yan Christensen looks ahead to the Graham Greene International Festival

Once again the Graham Greene International Festival opens its doors to guests that come from Barcelona and Berkhamsted, Washington and Wendover. The Festival starts on Thursday 29 September with the 2010 version of *Brighton Rock* at the Rex introduced by its director, Rowan Joffe. The 1947 version of the film will be shown the following evening introduced by the well known film writer Quentin Falk, who will also lead a discussion comparing the two films.

All Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning there will be wonderful talks on a variety of subjects. Some of the speakers will be old favourites such as professors François Gallix, Neil Sinyard and Cedric Watts.

We know they are excellent speakers, always with something new and interesting to say. All three are Greene scholars of the highest calibre and never fail to engage their audience.

We continue the *Brighton Rock* theme with a speaker, Julian Clapp, who will tell us about the famous seaside resort that was the background to Greene's novel. Graham Greene is still read and studied all over the world and this year we have a German PhD student, Christian

Hofferbert, who is presenting part of his thesis on aspects of Greene's writing. There will be more exciting scholarship from Professor Joyce Stavick from USA; she is new to the Festival and promises to talk about some not so quiet Americans and their attitude to the author. Professor Michael Brennan recently wrote a book on Greene's Fiction, Faith and Authorship and he will be with us to talk about the

book, and Professor Steve Chibnall – an authority on British films - will inform and entertain us. A lot of professors you might think; yes and as erudite as their title suggests, but also interesting and frequently amusing.

The author Lee Langley wrote the script for the filming of *The Tenth Man*, but her talk will range wider and take in her love of travel. Greene finally got an English Heritage Blue Plaque in London and Martin Jenkins, a trustee, is the man who made it happen and can tell us all about it. A faithful friend of the Trust, Bernard Ineichen, will talk about spies, comparing those of Greene with those of Norman Lewis.

Finally – for all you Radio 4 listeners – two speakers with strong Berkhamsted connections: Tim Bentinck, aka David Archer, was brought up here and has fond memories of the town. He retains links with the area and is a patron of the Town Hall where he will be speaking. The other “local” speaker is Ed Reardon whose life in Berkhamsted is regularly documented in *Ed Reardon's Week*. He is the after dinner speaker on Saturday evening.

It is traditional for Neil Sinyard to give the last talk and faithful as ever, he will be there Sunday morning. He is next year's Festival Director and that is something to look forward to.

Add to all that a book launch, some meals with friends and a wonderful atmosphere and you will surely understand that The 14th Graham Greene International Festival



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Garden tenants

Frank Norman tells us about the small visitors who set up home in his front garden



For some years I have enjoyed the glorious colourful spring blossoms of a Laburnum tree in the corner of a small lawn at the front of the house. A fairly substantial branch had grown out horizontally at about head height so it was necessary to be mindful of this when mowing around the tree - perhaps, not surprisingly, there have been a few occasions when my head was obstructed by the branch and minor injuries were sustained. Last year I let my head rule my heart (so to speak) and had the offending branch cut off close to the trunk.

Despite the surgery the tree once again produced a good show of blossom this spring, as well as a completely unexpected bonus - where the branch had

been cut off a small hole had appeared and from inside the trunk a continuous chirrupy sound was emanating.

After keeping a discreet eye on the comings and goings it was soon clear that a pair of blue tits had set up home and were busily fetching food for their young and keeping their nest clean. It was also clear that they flew extremely swiftly so after a little observation, patience and anticipation, and the help of camera technology, I was fortunate in recording some of their activity.

Editor's note: you can see another of Frank's photos of his month's back cover.

yB

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Rectory Lane Cemetery

Christopher Green on the opportunities and challenges of developing a local open space



Just off the High Street at the east end of the town, between Rectory Lane and Three Close Lane there are three acres of green, open space – the Rectory Lane Cemetery. It could be so much more than it is. The oldest part, at the lower end, is already managed by the Town Council as an area of mown grass and mature trees from which many of the memorials have been removed. However, the greater part of the cemetery is only roughly maintained with many tumbled memorials and many ash and sycamore saplings springing up among the graves. When members of the public were invited to

suggest how this area could be developed, most would like to see it managed like the lower end, as mown grass with groups of trees and shrubs, but other popular ideas were the development of part of the area as a wildlife reserve, and the introduction of trails, criss-crossing the area and highlighting wildlife interests or exploring Berkhamsted's history through the lives of the people who are buried there and whose memorials remain.

The Friends of Rectory Lane Cemetery are

(continues on page 28)

continued from previous page

working towards these goals. Last autumn they collaborated with the Hemel Hempstead Conservation Volunteers to spend two days clearing saplings and scrub – but it grows back very quickly and what is most needed is long term solutions. These cost money and the Friends are now assessing these costs and exploring sources of funding. It is interesting to see who made donations to defray the original cost of walling the cemetery. The land was the gift of the Countess of Bridgewater, and the cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1842. The names of the donors are recorded in a memorial of this occasion and include The London & Birmingham Railway Company and the Grand Junction Canal Company.

There are many tasks needing attention. To make mowing possible in the upper part of the cemetery, broken and untended memorials will have to be cleared and the ground levelled where graves have subsided. Trees need to be managed, removing those that are unwanted and planting ornamental varieties and shrubs. Memorials need to be refurbished and maintained. They have much to tell us about Berkhamsted's citizens and the history of the town during the past 170 years.

There are also many administrative issues to be resolved. Many different interests are involved – St Peter's Church, the Diocese, the Church Commissioners, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Charity Commissioners, Dacorum Borough Council, Berkhamsted Town

Council, and of course the families of those who are buried in the cemetery. Challenging negotiations are in prospect.

There are plenty of jobs to be done and the Friends need your help. Ideally the group needs to include people representing a wide range of interests and expertise from the historical and ecological to fund-raising and administration.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Alan Kemp at the Town Council on 01442 228945 or email at berkhamsted.towncouncil@dacorum.gov.uk
k JB

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. 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). We are also happy to promote projects, events and works by local groups.

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

The local beekeeper

Crispin Baker continues his monthly beekeeping diary

September is the month we undertake our feeding program. It is vitally important to feed the bees before winter, as having taken their honey stores just as the nectar flow finished, they would have faced certain starvation before next spring.

Some beekeepers feed the bees a solution of white sugar dissolved in water at the rate of one bag of sugar to one pint of water. As single hive may require up to 20 bags of sugar, which can become a laborious task when it comes to stirring it all in, inevitably resulting in another sticky kitchen floor!

Undissolved sugar crystals left in the solution by a lazy beekeeper can cause digestive problems for the bees at a later date, as can the use of brown or demerara sugars.

There is however now an alternative to all that slaving over a hot tub of sugar, and that is to purchase a ready made bee feed in the form of a sugar syrup. As part of the process of turning nectar into honey the bees add certain enzymes that chemically invert the sugars thereby rendering it ideal for storage and consumption. Ready made bee food is inverted by the manufacturer (a German company) using their own secret formula of organic enzymes. The result is a perfect food for the bees which we have used with great success for several years now, the bees love it and can't get enough. It is however, quite expensive but we adopted the policy of "nothing but the best for our bees" right from when we started beekeeping years ago.



Now here's an interesting fact, did you know that the beekeeper isn't the only robber in the apiary? The bees do it too! Feeding bees can cause a great deal of excitement in the hive, which can result in the bees forcing their way into other hives and robbing them of their honey and/or bee feed. This can result in a great deal of fighting between attacking and defending bees which in a worst case scenario results in a whole colony wiped out. We have witnessed this, and it's very tragic. Clumsily spilling bee feed around the hives can also instigate robbing, so feeding is best done very carefully and at the end of the day, when most bees have gone home to settle in for the night.

We can also help the bees to protect their stores by reducing the size of the entrance to the hive, thereby enabling the guard bees to defend their home against unwanted intruders i.e. their opportunistic neighbours.

Next month we'll hear about final winter preparations. Bee Happy! Bee friendly plants for this time of year: Marjoram,

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The last word *by Colin Garrett*

Berkhamsted Litter Pickers started two years ago. Our aim is to keep tidy the streets in which we live. Each volunteer undertakes to litter pick in their own street or part of it if it is a long one. The High Street and other commercial streets we leave to the professionals. To date we have 84 volunteers who go out at times of their own choosing and as often as they see fit in their particular street.

A recent article in the Daily Telegraph reviewed the book “Litter: How Other People’s Rubbish Shapes Our Lives”. The author, Theodore Dalrymple, concludes that Britain has turned into a giant rubbish bin because so many people now live in a selfish bubble and have no sense of civic duty.

I am amazed at the things that people drop in the street. The volunteers have found the following in the past 12 months: in Cowper Road a complete sofa, in New Road lots of golf balls and the carcase of a deer with its antlers removed, in Butts meadow a Berkhamsted Girls’ School uniform (!), many bottles or cans of drinks sometimes full and unopened, babies’ dummies, a shrink-wrapped cucumber in Anglefield Road, sixteen identical bags of dog poo left at one metre intervals, a complete instant barbeque outfit and two weeks’ supply of contraceptive pills.

By far the most common litter in terms of number of items collected is detritus left

by smokers – cellophane off the packet, foil from inside the packet, numerous fag ends and finally the packet itself. Do smokers drop these items on the floor at home or in their own gardens ?

Another common item which everyone will recognise is the Post Office red rubber band. Several of us have collections of hundreds of them. I found about 25 in one place. We know to our cost that the Post Office is trying to economise. They could start by re-cycling these rubber bands.

The bane of the litter picker’s life is shredded paper. Even if it goes in the paper re-cycling bin it gets blown about when the bin is tipped into the collecting vehicle. We urge people to re-cycle it in such a way that it cannot blow about. I put my shredded paper in a plastic bag which I take to the tip when I go. It can be emptied into the paper container and the bag taken away to be used again.

We have plenty of laws about littering but has anyone ever seen them enforced? Most of the time the police and PCSOs have better things to do. Perhaps the traffic wardens could be authorised to issue fixed penalty notices to offenders?

Our volunteers cover about half the residential streets in Berkhamsted. If any reader would like to volunteer please contact Colin Garrett on 01442 866694 or email colinngarrett@btinternet.com. *yB*

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