

*the magazine for town and parish*

# *your* **Berkhamsted**



Mystery aircraft in Aldbury  
Remembering a local hero  
My Berkhamsted  
Get safe online  
Seasonal recipe

January 2012

50p

## *From the Editor* January 2012



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

**Welcome to the January issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.**

**O**n behalf of the *Your Berkhamsted* team I wish all our readers a Happy New Year.

In this issue we read about Berkhamsted in the news, learn more about internet safety, discover more about our commons, meet a volunteer, find out how to cook a lovely seasonal dish and reflect on a popular phrase. We also remember the unfortunate victims of a local air crash and the sacrifice made by war hero Maurice Pring.

We say thank you and goodbye to two valued members of the *Your Berkhamsted* team this month (see page 15) which is an opportune moment to remind our readers that the magazine is brought to you each month by a group of local volunteers. We always welcome new members who would like to take part on either a regular or occasional basis. Please contact me for more details (contact details are also on page 15).

This year we hope to publish photographs from Berkhamsted's past as part of a regular feature. Do you have old photographs of Berkhamsted people or landmarks from years gone by? Whether your photos are from the 1980s (which doesn't seem so long ago to many of us) or from even further back, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

**Ian Skillicorn, Editor**

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Photo credits: Page 11: Vickers 664 Valetta T.3 'N-B' of RAF College Cranwell at Blackbushe Airport © RuthAS and reproduced under Creative Commons Attribution 3.0

Page 28: Headstone of Maurice Pring's grave courtesy of Joydeep Sircar  
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## *Your Berkhamsted Leader* by Fr Luke Geoghegan



Usually, January is sale time but in these economic times, the sales have been on for several months already – even at the

poshest shops.

Just before Christmas Mary Portas, ‘retail guru’, reported to the Prime Minister on the dreadful state of Britain’s high streets. As if we didn’t know. Berkhamsted is one of the few positive exceptions to my mind but we’ll come back to that. Most high streets are full of boarded up and vacant premises, sad looking chains and what I call the fall – out of the way we live now: cheque cashing / pay day loan shops, the ‘everything for less than a pound shops’ and what calls itself ‘cash converter’ – that’s a pawnshop to you and me.

Portas recommends a whole range of solutions from cheaper parking, to coordinating committees, to viewing the high street ‘as a business’ (no, I’ve no idea what this means either), to promoting markets, to a national market day as well as many other ideas. None of these ideas seem bad in themselves but I wonder if something crucial is missing.

The other week I walked the length of Oxford Street in London. The eastern end is quite dreadful: semi vacant shops, tacky tourist stalls and down-at-heel fast food joints. I have a faint memory that the eastern end of Oxford Street was awful when I was a student and someone telling me airily that it was just ‘end of lease’ before a ‘prestigious development’ came along. Quite an end of lease – I was student about thirty years ago. So if the good people of eastern Oxford Street can’t get it together what hope a community in

the West Midlands, South Wales or the north east of England?

So let’s look at it the other way. What makes Berkhamsted high street good? Well in my personal hall of fame reading south / north and not in order of preference: Bobbies, The Rex, Home and Colonial (especially the café), Waterstones, the ironmongers that used to be Saltmarsh (they can find you anything!), Oxfam (those window displays are ‘to die for’ as Mary Portas might say), Oxfam bookshop, the lock shop (fascinating!), the two interior design shops, all those shops that sell elegant clothes for women, the Way Inn (we still have a post office!), the market, the French market, and I could go on....What do they have in common? They are independent (OK not Waterstones, but the book selection is different to other Waterstones), they have a sense of style, and they have an innate confidence. So my message is twofold. First, don’t take them for granted. Use ‘em or lose them. Second, Berkhamsted is an affluent community with a sense of style and an innate confidence – and that supports retailers. There is a big reason why other high streets are collapsing. And why the pound-stretchers, cash converters and pay day loan shops are taking over. It’s not the only reason, but it’s a big reason. It’s called lack of money. And based on my travels, not always but usually, the worst high streets I’ve seen are in the poorest areas. My prediction is until the economy is sorted and people are working again our high streets will get worse. I didn’t hear that bit in Mary Portas’ report but maybe I missed it. Can I call myself a retail guru now? *yB*

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## ***Around the town***

The latest news from around Berkhamsted

### **Managing your money**

CAP Money Berkhamsted is organising a free money management course in January. It is joining up with CAP Money Hemel Hempstead, and holding it at Haven House, Hemel Hempstead on Wednesday 18th January at 1pm, lasting up to 2 hours. The course has been timed particularly to help those who have children at school. It is aimed at anyone who would like to learn about a system that will enable them to be more in control of their finances. If you would like to join a course, or know someone who would benefit, then please contact Mike Wallis either on 01442 865521 or 07891 760244 or send an email to [capmoneyberkhamsted@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:capmoneyberkhamsted@yahoo.co.uk). For more information visit [www.capmoney.org](http://www.capmoney.org). See the Parish Pages for more information.

### **Events at St Peter's Church and The Court House presented by the Cowper Society**

Monday 9th January at 8pm  
RECITAL: The King of Instrument Organ Recital Series at St Peter's.  
Jonathan Cunliffe (St Mary's Church, Paddington, Green, London). Free admission – retiring collection

Monday 16th January 7.30pm for 8pm  
TALK: Cowper Winter Talk at The Court House.  
Stephen Lally - Armoured Cars and Tanks in Kensington, 1914-16. There will be wine beforehand. Free admission - retiring collection.

Monday 23rd January at 8pm  
RECITAL: The King of Instrument Organ Recital Series at St. Peter's. Adrian Davis. Free admission - retiring collection.

Monday 30th January 7.30pm for 8pm  
TALK: Cowper Winter Talk at St Peter's Jon Lee - The Organ. There will be wine beforehand. Free admission - retiring collection.

### **Our Common History**

The Chilterns Commons Project is holding a one day seminar all about the history of commons in this area on Saturday 28th January. The seminar is open to everyone but booking is essential for this free event. For more information please see page 30.

### **All Saints' services**

There is a service of Wholeness and Healing at All Saints' at 4pm on Sunday January 29th. The morning service at 10am that day will be a special Christingle service.

### **Local author makes book prize final**

Local author Sue Hampton, featured in October 2011's issue, has learned that her book *Traces* earned more votes than any other children's book in the autumn collection of The People's Book Prize. This means it goes through to the final and the big vote-off at the end of May. Sue will go to the dinner in London where the prizes will be presented to the winners of the three categories. We wish Sue the very best of luck!

*yB*

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## *Read all about us!*

**Julian Dawson** takes a look at varied and surprising references to our town on the internet

This month's jaunt through the tangled webs of internet chatter begins at the Great British Life website, where we are treated to the unseen world of the continuity announcer. Gary Terzza, who plies his particular trade for Channel 4, confesses that he enjoys relaxing in the coffee shops of Berkhamsted and Harpenden, and has even made the shocking discovery of a tea shop in Potten End. So listen out to orders for skinny lattes, long espressos and tea cakes and see if you can spot the voice, as it were.

The Hemel Hempstead Gazette somewhat gleefully recounts the tale of the unfortunate who managed to impale himself on his own umbrella, and had to be rescued by Berkhamsted fire services in what must be considered one of their more unusual call outs in recent times. He ruefully admits that in future he will wear a hat in inclement weather, while the rest of us prepare health and safety risk assessments for wet weather apparel.

Now then, now then, now then. According to the Bucks Herald, a Berkhamsted sculptor has put his name forward to create a statue of the late Sir Jimmy Savile. As it happens, Douglas Jennings has said that he wants to commemorate the legendary DJ and fund raiser, but 'ows about that then, others feel that Sir Jimmy himself would rather the money be spent on his beloved Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the cradle of the Paralympics.

In the debut 'Read All About', I wrote

about the Spirit of Berkhamsted, a lifeboat made possible by local fundraising. We heard more about that in a following issue. However, it is not just lifeboats named after the town, but also a canal boat, which may be rather less surprising given our association with the Grand Junction. A blog by the name of Chertsey130 explains that 48 large Woolwich motor boats were delivered to the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company in the 1930s. One such still extant is a butty called Berkhamsted, which intriguingly is actually a false name and is probably in fact the Ayr. I would be delighted if any canal faring readers could tell us more about Ayr Butties in a future issue. It's another world I tell you.

Rather closer to my heart, the Birdingtringreservoirs blog in a posting raving about a sighting of a bar-tailed godwit at Wilstone on 14<sup>th</sup> November, goes on to mention a flock of twelve redpolls seen whilst working in a garden off Shooters Way. The blog is written by Lee Evans, a stalwart of the Tring Reservoirs birding scene. If you are remotely interested in birding, do follow his posts.

My last blog spot comes courtesy of the Between the pages blog which delights in telling us about a Pirates of the Caribbean cake. No, not infused with rum (though that sounds like a jolly good idea), but hand painted by the creator Natasha Collins of the town. The cake is crowned with an edible Jack Sparrow. Definitely worth tweeting about I'd say. *yB*



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# **Hospice News**

## **Urgent stock appeal**

The Hospice of St Francis is appealing for donations of stock to sell in their Hospice of St Francis shops.

If you are having a New Year clear-out or perhaps have some unwanted Christmas gifts that need a good home, the Hospice would be grateful to receive books, china, bric-a-brac, good quality clothing, toys, linen, pictures, jewellery and furniture.

As a charity The Hospice of St Francis is now able to claim Gift Aid in the sale of items donated to any of their shops. This means they can claim an extra 25p on every £1 raised from the sale of Gift Aided items.

To enable the Hospice to do this, they need a simple Gift Aid declaration form to be signed in one of their shops. The only requirement is that the person signing must pay UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme, visit the website at [www.stfrancis.org.uk](http://www.stfrancis.org.uk) or contact 01442 869550.

### **Hospice shop locations**

There are Hospice of St Francis shops in Abbots Langley (3 Langley Parade), Berkhamsted (274/276 High Street), Bovingdon (88 High Street), Chesham (116 High Street), Hemel Hempstead (1 Bellgate, Highfield) and St Albans (21 The Quadrant, Marshalswick).



*Inside the new Hospice shop*

## **The Hospice of St Francis online shop**

Did you know that the Hospice has an eBay shop?

There are four ways you can help the eBay shop:

- 1) Bid for items at [www.shopatstfrancis.co.uk](http://www.shopatstfrancis.co.uk);
- 2) Donate any unwanted collectables;
- 3) Volunteer a few hours to help pack up items or, if you have eBay experience, help listing items;
- 4) Be a Community Seller and donate a percentage of your own eBay sales to the Hospice.

For more information please call Sam Evans on 01442 869550.

*yB*

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# *Mystery aircrash at Aldbury*

**Dan Parry** describes a tragic aircrash which made headlines almost sixty years ago

**I**n looking for somewhere to walk off the Christmas excesses, the woods above Aldbury are always a haven of tranquillity. As you drive along the B4506, the main road through Ashridge, you pass the Monument on your left before taking a left turn into Toms Hill Road, through ancient beech woods. Eventually you reach the ridge above Aldbury, where you might find parasol mushrooms the size of dinner-plates, ancient earthworks - and the scene of one of the saddest events to take place in our part of the world.

On January 6th, 1954, four aircrew and 12 passengers, all serving with the Royal Air Force's No. 2 Air Navigation School, took off from their base on Thorney Island, West Sussex. Most of them were young rugby players preparing for a match against RAF Halton. But that day, the exposed expanses of Halton had experienced plunging temperatures, forcing the team to fly to Bovingdon instead. There they played a team from Halton before preparing for the journey home. What happened next is not disputed. George Ward, at the time the Under-Secretary of State for Air, later told Parliament that an extra passenger boarded the aircraft but that one extra person "would not have brought the all-up weight of the aircraft beyond the maximum permissible for take-off". It was dark, but given that the crew still had visibility of more than half a mile, and that ground temperatures were believed to be above freezing, the aircraft was cleared for take-off.

Ward said that the aircraft left Bovingdon at 5.16pm, and "was last seen climbing at about 400 feet with a gentle turn to port". Then, just five miles north of Bovingdon, the Valetta inexplicably lost height. Witnesses saw no fire or smoke or any other visible evidence of a problem, but in the frozen darkness the plane sank lower until it was barely skimming the trees. Caught by branches the aircraft smashed into the snowy hillside, both engines were ripped off and the fuselage slithered through the woods for another 100 yards, leaving behind it a trail of wreckage and bodies. Debris was thrown across an area two miles wide.

First to arrive were the chief ranger from the National Trust's Ashridge Estate and four of his staff, and they encountered a horrific scene. Later the ranger told the Times: "Ten bodies were scattered about and we found two men alive. One was outside the aircraft and did not seem to be very badly hurt. The other was pulled from inside the smashed fuselage and was only semi-conscious." One of the men later died in hospital, leaving a sole survivor. At an inquest held in Berkhamsted, Pilot Officer P. D. Cliff said he could remember nothing after boarding the aircraft and was unable to shed any light on the accident and the loss of his friends, among them J. K. Noyce, J. A. F. James, J. N. Clay, and K. C. Tatlow. A Pathe news crew, filming the next day, captured images of mangled bits of engine buried in shattered tree stumps, amid reminders of the considerable

*(continues on page 12)*



*A Valetta T3 similar to WJ474*

*continued from previous page*

human cost. Striped rugby jumpers, a rugby ball and boots still lay in the snow.\*

An RAF report later said that “snow was falling thickly”, but today, the cause of the crash officially remains a mystery. Ward ruled out negligence, and insisted “that the weather conditions at the time of take-off had no bearing on the cause of the crash”. The inquest found that there was nothing wrong with the engines, and no other technical fault was found. George Ward concluded that: “It has not been possible to establish the cause of the accident, and it can only be assumed that the pilot was trying to fly within sight of the ground, in conditions of poor visibility, and that in doing so he crashed into the hill.” The coroner was unable to add any more, finding simply that: “For some reason

height was lost – no one knows why, no one will ever know.”

At this time of the year some corners of Ashridge are particularly stunning. Without their leaves, the trees along Tom’s Road - especially just before the tight hairpin bend that drops into Aldbury - allow splendid views of the hills towards Wendover. Here, on the right-hand side of the road, a track leads down to Old Copse Lodge, where on the left a small clearing is all that remains to remind us of a bitterly cold day in January 1954 when the lives of 16 young men were suddenly brought to an end, in circumstances that still elude us today.

\*The Pathe film can be seen at <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=31532> yB

## *Get safe online*

**Clive Michel** of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre has advice on helping keep children safe online

**N**ext time you sit in front of your laptop take a very close look. Can you see the world of opportunity and openness that lies behind it? Do you notice the myriad people, products, services, issues and topics that this little plastic box opens up to you? Do you understand it all? It is little wonder that the latest figures suggest that only a very small percentage of us actually do fully understand what all this change means for us and our families.

But then we are adults. We should be the ones showing the way. If we don't know then how can our families cope? As someone who has spent the last 6 years working with children of all ages then let me tell you, when it comes to exploring and exploiting the internet and when it comes to making the most from online environments, then it is children and young people who are the pioneers and it us – the adults – who are following in their wake.

OFCOM throws some interesting facts at us. 4 out of 5 parents surveyed say they know what sites their children are using. 1 in 3 children though say their parents have no idea. But let us take stock and be fair before we start to turn against our own parenting skills and before we all throw our hands up and resist yet more of the same about internet safety.

Today 30 million people in the UK are on Facebook – if it were a country it would be the third largest. Add to that the fact that 47% of teens in the UK now own a

smart phone – compared with 27% of adults – and it is little wonder that we have been washed over with technology and online pressures. What parent could be expected to cope? It is no longer the latest trainers or sportswear that children want and are teased about if they don't have – it is the latest phone, the latest gadget, the latest profile or online avatar. If you don't communicate through your profile, if you don't go online as soon as humanly possible each and every day then quite simply very often you just don't fit in.

So as parents what are our options? Well don't fall into the trap that you need to keep up to speed with what your child is doing online at all times. You can't and when it comes to keeping track I would suggest you won't. These online worlds for young people are often very private worlds, where they can share and speak to their friends. They feel safe and secure and they want to explore this new world. So focus on the behaviour. Ask your child about what sites they are using or know about. Make sure you and they are alert to security settings and that they understand the need to ensure that the people they are talking to online are friends in the offline world too. Keep the advice simple. Would your daughter or son want to walk down Berkhamsted High Street with a billboard covered in all their personal details and photos for everyone to see – I doubt it so ensure they limit what they post in the public street that is the internet – it is not for everyone to know.

*(continues on page 14)*

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There is one more bit of advice. Make sure you and your family know where to go when you have that first inkling of something going wrong. Know how to report because it is easy to do. For young children it means ensuring that your child knows to come to you and that you in turn know where to go. For you and older children it is knowing that organisations exist out there specifically to help tackle your problem.

I work for the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre – or CEOP for short. We are part of the policing community and bring real bite when it comes to protecting children. We partner with a host of organisations to provide advice and guidance and receive on average 400 reports each month many from parents and adults but also many from young people themselves.

You see, our families are incredibly resilient and what we find is that when children know of the dangers then they will protect not only themselves but will also take steps to protect others by seeking out help and making reports. And those reports have results – offenders in prison today because young people and adults took time to say enough is enough and made that vital report.

So please take this article as it is meant – not a condescending battering of parenting skills but for us all to take time, consider and do the right thing. Reports we see come from all walks of life, from tech savvy teens and hi-tech parents to those who really do shy away for fear of the technology. No one is too clever to

sometimes feel that something is going wrong, or to be tempted to go that one step further when they know they shouldn't. When that happens it is time to stop and to know where to turn.

Click [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) to report any suspicious contact online  
Visit [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org) for up to date independent advice on internet security  
*yB*

### **Your Berkhamsted Needs You!**

The editorial team 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.

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Features: Julian Dawson, Dan Parry

Layout: Sam Limbert

### **With our thanks**

This month we give our sincere thanks to two people who are leaving the Your Berkhamsted team.

Sheila Miller has been circulation manager of Your Berkhamsted (and previously the Berkhamsted Review) for many years.

Fiona Powell was a member of the founding editorial team of Your Berkhamsted and editor of the Parish Pages of the magazine.

Thank you to both Sheila and Fiona for their hard work and the generous support they have given over the years to our town and parish magazine.

### **Join Your Berkhamsted**

We are currently seeking volunteers who could deliver Your Berkhamsted to subscribers in or near their own street. Please contact Joanne Lloyd-Evans if you would like to know more.

We are always happy to hear from readers who would like to suggest articles for Your Berkhamsted, or to contribute news features or photographs of local interest.

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## ***CAP Money Berkhamsted***

CAP Money Berkhamsted has just run yet another successful money management course which has helped several people organise their finances in a much more organised way and get their finances back on track. Attendees said that the course had given them much more control of their finances and that using cash rather than a credit card or debit card had helped focus the mind and helped them to cut back on their expenditure.

We are organising a further free money management course in January, joining up with CAP Money Hemel Hempstead, and holding it at Haven House, Hemel Hempstead. The course has been timed particularly to help those who have children at school and will start on Wednesday 18th January at 1pm, lasting up to 2 hours. It is aimed at anyone who

would like to learn about a system that will enable them to be more in control of their finances.

If you would like to join a course, or know someone who would benefit, then please contact Mike Wallis either on 01442 865521 or 07891 760244 or send an email to [capmoneyberkhamsted@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:capmoneyberkhamsted@yahoo.co.uk) to discuss how we can help. For more information visit [www.capmoney.org](http://www.capmoney.org).

Any donation to CAP Money Berkhamsted would help towards the cost of running these courses and be gratefully appreciated. We have an account within Sunnyside Church accounting system so any cheque should be in favour of 'Sunnyside Church (CAP Money)' and sent to me at Brynhyfryd, Vicarage Road, Potten End, Herts HP4 2QZ. yB

## ***The Alpha Course and The Alpha Supper***

Many people today are not quite sure what Christians believe or whether it is still relevant. Do you know someone like that? Or is that you? If so, then Alpha may be the answer. Alpha is a relaxed informal opportunity to ask all the questions you could ever have about Christianity today. So why not bring someone along to the Alpha Supper at Sunnyside Church Hall on 11th January at 7.15pm? The Alpha supper explains what the course is about and provides a chance to dip a toe in the water on a no commitment basis.

Alpha is for everyone. It doesn't matter

whether you go to any particular church or none at all.

The course starts on Wednesday 18th January at Sunnyside Church, running for 10 Wednesdays (excluding half-term). It begins each week with supper at 7.15 pm, followed by a video and an opportunity to discuss the issues. It finishes by 10.00 pm at the latest.

If you are interested please contact Kathy O'Dair on 01442 386776 or email [odair@rivergarden.net](mailto:odair@rivergarden.net). More information can be found on the Sunnyside Church website: [www.sunnysidechurch.org.uk](http://www.sunnysidechurch.org.uk)

yB

# ***Mothers' Union***

By **Margaret Burbidge**

**M**others' Union is feeling the pinch. It has had to tighten its belt while trying to sustain its programme of work. The 2010 Annual Report speaks of the difficulties the organisation and its members face in the current global financial crisis, yet on every page there are stories of better lives for women and their families around the world.

Two outreach projects illustrate this. The first, in this country, is in Halifax; a diverse, multi-cultural area of Yorkshire. Many families experience poverty and deprivation and among them are sanctuary seekers and refugees who speak little English. The St Augustine's Centre provides English language training and support for these families. MU members volunteer to offer friendship and help for a group who meet each week. The women meet others facing similar situations and can learn new skills like needlework, cookery and how to grow herbs and fruit. Djenabe, originally from Guinea, and her daughter go each week. Far away from her own home she says the group is like her family.

Over 5,000 miles away in Johannesburg, in a deprived area with poor hygiene and sanitation, is a Home Based Centre. It was started 10 years ago by MU members to support people living with HIV/Aids. The centre has grown and now involves care providers from social services, leaving MU members free to visit patients in their homes. They care for vulnerable children, orphans and those who are terminally ill. Some need washing and bathing, or food



or just companionship. Their vision is to build a hospice to offer respite care for the most vulnerable patients.

In dark times the light of hope and love continues to shine. Members in the UK dig deep into their pockets to do their best to ensure Christian Care for Families continues to meet the needs of those who have so little. *yB*

## **Your Berkhamsted Needs You!**

### **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](mailto:editor@yourberkhamsted.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
- 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  
 Look at St Peter's website for Choral Evensong

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

#### **All Saints—January**

10.00 am Holy Communion Morning Service  
 29th January  
 10.00am Christingle  
 4.00pm Healing Service

# January Parish Diary

Mon 9th	8.00pm	Cowper Society presents: Organ Recital—Jonathan Cunliffe
Mon 16th	8:00pm	Cowper Society Winter Talks— ‘Armoured Cars and Tanks in Kensington, 1914-16’ by Stephen Lally in The Court House
Mon 23rd	8:00pm	Cowper Society presents: Organ Recital –Adrian Davis
Mon 30th	8.00pm	Cowper Society Winter Talks—A talk on the Organ and its Playing by Jon Lee in St Peter’s

*Parish Diary information can be found at [www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk](http://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk)*

## Baptisms

20 November Poppy Eliza Rogers; Imogen Catharine Mary Poulton

27 November Alexander James Milsom; Zachary Rogan David McCready

## Funerals

7 November Elizabeth Doris Bell

11 November Herbert John Collier

15 November Irene Mary Blunt

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

## *The best of My Berkhamsted*

We would welcome reader suggestions for local people to interview for a new series of My Berkhamsted columns. Please get in touch if you would like to nominate someone, or even yourself. In the meantime, we look back on some previous profiles.

**Rowan Coleman, local author whose latest novel is *Lessons in Laughing Out Loud***

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

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

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



Rowan Coleman

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

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

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

*Berkhamsted is crying out for...*

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

**Adrian Scarborough, local actor and star of BBC1's *Upstairs Downstairs***

*The local place where I like to relax and reflect is...*

The Rex. If I'm on stage in the evenings and my days are free, watching a matinee movie feels like bunking off school. I like going to the cinema on my own and The Rex is a space where you can really breathe.

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

The view from Sunnyside Allotments up and down the length of the Valley. This ever changing view and its seasonal textures and light are staggeringly beautiful. The breadth of it can make your head explode. If you're lucky you may see a woodpecker or a soaring Red Kite on the hunt.

*I moved to Berkhamsted because...*

It feels like it cares about itself.

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

## *Local people*



*Adrian Scarborough*

The seemingly endless, indiscriminate building over the last 10 years. Where are the core services to support this staggering expansion? The hardest question...when do we say enough?

### ***I'm proud to live in Berkhamsted because...***

It takes pride in being a real community.

### ***Berkhamsted is crying out for...***

A greengrocer.

### ***When I tell people about Berkhamsted I always tell them...***

How accessible it is to London. Most Londoners seem to think it's close to Dundee!

### ***Phillip Conway-Brown, local tenor***

### ***The local place where I like to relax and reflect is...***

I'm not great at just relaxing in one place, but I am a keen runner and there are several spots where I love to be running; the fields above the

Berkhamsted cricket club is one and in the woods by Ashridge College is another.

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

I feel obliged to say my wife and children! Apart from them, however, the canal on a snowy winter's morning is stunning.

### ***I moved to Berkhamsted because...***

Like many people I know, we moved out of London to bring up a family. Berkhamsted is both child friendly and small enough to still have a good community feel about it.

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

The monstrous building that runs along the high street from the Old Town Hall to Tesco's.

### ***Berkhamsted is crying out for...***

When I arrived in Berkhamsted, I said that the town was crying out for a Thai restaurant. Within two years there were several. I think now is the time for a really good chocolate shop. *yB*



*Phillip Conway-Brown*

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## *Profile of a volunteer*

**Wally Finch**, Chairman of Berkhamsted & District Branch RNLI, introduces us to one of their committee members

**T**he start of the new year is often a time when we think of donating some of our time to a cause that is important to us.



The Sail Training Association ships as first officer. During this period he also became a crew member on one of the lifeboats stationed on the River

This profile is of Captain Richard Eggleton, who did just that when he became involved with the Berkhamsted Branch of the RNLI.

Richard was born in Wigginton and at an early age became interested in lifeboats. He began his association with the branch when he was 10 years old, helping to seal envelopes and stick stamps.

In 1997, now grown up and a member of the committee, he proudly carried the RNLI flag when we presented the cheque to the Institution for the purchase of the lifeboat "Spirit of Berkhamsted".

He decided that the sea would be his life and in 1999 joined the Merchant Marine. The following years saw him serving and training both at sea and ashore.

Between 2005 and 2007 he was aboard

Thames, "Tower Pier".

This involved doing 12 hour shifts - these boats are on call 24 hours a day and the stations are manned continuously.

In 2007 he joined a Norwegian company engaged in supplying the North Sea oil rigs and has now obtained his captaincy, picking up a new ship at Den Helder, being based out of Aberdeen.

This year he moved to a new house in Dartmouth where he has volunteered for crew on the lifeboat when on leave.

Richard is 28 years old, happily married with two children and remains with us as an honorary committee member.

His grandmother, Mrs Bolton-King, is a full member of the committee. *JB*



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# ***Seasonal Recipes: January***

**Joanne Lloyd Evans** begins a series of monthly seasonal recipes



## **Parsnip, leek and apple soup with a garnish of parsnip chips and pancetta**

Parsnips and leeks are at their best during the depths of winter. Parsnips have a long growing season, but improve after the first frosts of the winter, as the cold converts more of the starch to sugar, making them taste sweeter. This soup is sweet, creamy and comforting on cold days.

### **Ingredients for soup (serves 6)**

1kg parsnips, roughly chopped  
6 thin leeks, sliced  
1 onion, chopped  
large knob of butter  
1 tbsp olive oil  
1.5L water  
1 good quality chicken stock cube

1 medium sweet apple, peeled and chopped  
1 tsp fennel seeds (optional)

Melt the butter and olive oil in a large saucepan and sweat the parsnips, leeks and onion over a medium heat for 15 minutes with the lid on. Take care that the vegetables do not brown or burn. Add the water, crumbled stock cube and apple and bring to the boil. If using the fennel seeds, ideally toast them in a dry frying pan and grind with a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle to help bring out the flavour. However, they can also just be thrown straight in the pot if you prefer!

When the vegetables are all soft (around 45 minutes), transfer the soup to a blender and process until smooth. Check the  
*(continues on page 27)*



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*continued from page 25*

flavour and add salt and pepper to your taste. You may wish to add more water for a thinner soup.

**Ingredients for garnish (optional)**

1 parsnip  
2 tsp lard, dripping or butter  
2 tsp honey  
100g pancetta cubes

Pre-heat the oven to 200C and put the lard or other fat into a small oven dish or tray,

then pop into the oven to heat up. Cut the parsnips into thin batons (like chips) and boil for 3-4 minutes.

Pull the hot dish out of the oven and toss the parsnips in the fat. Drizzle over the honey and roast in the oven for around 20 minutes until golden and crispy.

Heat a small frying pan and tip in the pancetta cubes. Fry it until crispy and drain on some kitchen towel.

Arrange the parsnip chips and pancetta cubes on top of the soup and serve. *JB*

## *Oxfam's Aid*

*Oxfam*

### **Audrey Hope**

**14.5** million people worldwide are estimated to have benefited from the work of overseas aid charity Oxfam in the last year. They include 5.7 million people given access to life-giving safe water and 2.5 million provided with life-saving sanitation. 6.5 million have been supported during humanitarian crises and work has been undertaken in 57 countries.

Impressive numbers indeed but only meaningful when translated into individual stories. In Nepal Sabina's arid field is now green with wheat, thanks to an Oxfam micro-irrigation system and her neighbour is growing garlic, ginger, cauliflowers and capsicum. In a Nairobi slum a new bio-sphere housing toilets, hand-washing facilities, showers and a

meeting room has benefited 1500 people, and young people have built a recycling workshop turning plastic litter into household objects like buckets.

In Ethiopia a seed crusher has produced 25,000 litres of cooking oil in three months, putting food on the table and providing water on tap for women machine operators like Bayuth and Belaynesh and over 6000 co-op members.

Why not make it your New Year resolution to be part of this inspiring story by volunteering at one of Oxfam's shops? Both standard and bookshops offer many and varied opportunities to get involved and hours are flexible. *JB*

## *Remembering Maurice Pring*

**Joydeep Sircar** concludes his brief history of a local hero, which began last month

In June 1943 the squadron received a dozen single-seater Hawker Hurricanes equipped with pilot-operated AI Mark 6 radar. Found wanting against the Luftwaffe, these had been sent to India to try their luck against the Japanese. Pring, keen pilot that he was, learnt to fly the Hurricanes, although as a Beaufighter pilot he need not have done so.

Around this time Pring forced down an American bomber with its IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) switched off. The bomber crew thought being forced down by the famous Maurice Pring was a great joke and asked him to join them for a convivial get-together, which he did.

On December 5th, a clear, sunny Sunday, the Japanese returned to Calcutta. 18 Sallys and 74 Oscar fighters took off from Magwe in Central Burma, followed by a second wave of 9 'Betty' bombers escorted by 27 Zeros. The Japanese flew far out into the Bay of Bengal before turning towards Calcutta.

258 Squadron (Hurricanes) led by Flt. Lt. Arthur Brown and 136 Squadron (Spitfires) were scrambled first from the Chittagong-Ramu area. Only 258 intercepted : W/O P. I. Hickes shot down a Sally, while Brown went missing after being heard to say he was attacking. 136 turned back due to shortage of fuel. Four other squadrons failed to find the raiders. It then became clear that the Japanese were heading for Calcutta.

12 Hurricanes of 67 Squadron from Alipore and 9 from 146 Sqn. at Baigachi intercepted the Japanese first wave East of Calcutta. They ran into the fighter screen. 67 and 146 each lost one fighter and had others damaged. 67 pilot P/O Aubrey Fraser Bond RCAF was killed.

Then there was another raid alarm: the second wave of raiders were coming 45 minutes after the first, and they had achieved surprise. All other squadrons had shot their bolt. Only 176 was left, and in desperation Operations committed them.

Four Beaufighters took off and climbed to 21000 feet but could go no higher. Realizing they were sitting ducks for Japanese fighters, Operations mercifully recalled them.

Five Hurricanes took off ten minutes after the Beaus. Brocklehurst led, followed by Flt. Lt. G.R. Halbeard, P/O Andy Whyte, W/O E.R. Harris, and F/O Maurice Pring. Pring, a Beaufighter pilot about to go on home leave, had pleaded to be allowed to join, and the squadron CO, Wing Commander H.C. Goddard, had reluctantly agreed to let him. Carl Morgan says Goddard's parting words to Pring were "Very well Pring, be it on your own head."

Brocklehurst thought they were going after a lone Dinah. He was tragically wrong. Ground Control sent them after the bombers, and failed to warn them about fighters. As they dived at the Bettys they



above them and coming out of the sun. Raked by 20mm cannon and 7.7 mm machine guns, Pring, Halbeard and Whyte went down – only the latter baled out. Brocklehurst was shot up and his aircraft written off. It was bloody shambles.

Zero pilot Warrant Officer Sadaaki Akamatsu, a colorful character who finished the war with 27 victories, claimed four fighters shot down. The bombers did considerable damage to the dock area and some 350 civilians were killed.

176 Squadron reacted to the tragedy with grief mixed with anger at the decision to send night fighter pilots in Hurricanes out against Zeros. A search party located Pring's body, and he was laid to rest on Sunday, December 12, 1943 in the Bhowanipore Cemetery. Near him lies Aubrey Bond. Arthur Brown and Geoffrey Halbeard were

never found: their names appear on the Singapore War Memorial, where all missing aircrew of South-East Asia are commemorated.

Calcutta mourned Pring. No one did so more sincerely than the thousands of children and teenagers who had idolized him. One could think of fates worse than that. yB





# *Our common history*

**Rachel Sanderson**, Commons Project Officer at the Chilterns Conservation Board, on a fascinating day of talks this month

Commons have been at the heart of our Chiltern communities since medieval times and have a valuable place in our social and cultural heritage. With around 200 commons, from more than 100ha to less than 0.01ha, they are a vital feature of our historic landscape.

The historic use of commons has left a legacy all around us today. Think about geology and our local rocks (eg clunch, flints, and clay), quarried on commons and found in buildings across the Chilterns. Archaeology is not just about looking for bones; it often uncovers valuable insights into human interaction with commons.

Pubs, places, people, ponds and photographs all have a story to tell about our commons that contributes to the mosaic that is the Chilterns. Some names are fairly obvious – The Brickmakers Arms, the Chairmakers Arms, the Crooked Billet – others less so – City Pond, in Bledlow Ridge, is just one that requires some digging to reveal its history. Why City?

The World Wars have left their marks which add to the historical jigsaw – the WWI trenches on Marlow, Northchurch and Berkhamsted commons and WWII tank tracks across Naphill are just two examples.

As the older generations die out and their memories are lost to public record, it is ever more essential to investigate, research and study the local history associated with commons before it is too late. Research topics range from local projects, such as the use of a common's

resources in local industries, to Chilterns-wide projects including the importance of commons to drovers and travelling people through the centuries.

## **Our Common History: Saturday 28th January 2012 at Green Park, Aston Clinton**

At this fascinating one-day seminar, our guest speakers will provide an insight into the history of the Chiltern commons and their heritage from the dawn of time to the 20th century.

- Dr Jill Eyers - The geology and archaeology of Chiltern commons
- Alison Doggett - Commons in the historic landscape of the Chilterns
- Graham Bathe - Commons and their contribution to rural life and folklore
- Prof Ian Beckett - Military use of commons and how to research local military records
- Dave Greenwood - Mapping the WWI trenches on Marlow Common
- Rachel Sanderson - Chilterns Commons Project – how to get involved

Come and learn about what we already know and discover what we are hoping to find out over the next few years. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, funds are available to support these research projects so find out how you can get involved. Booking is essential. Please email [dhunter@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:dhunter@chilternsaonb.org) for an application form. *yB*

*The last word* by Chris Clegg

Have you noticed how the phrase “Take care” has become almost universal as the current way to end a conversation? Whether on the phone, or face to face, from friend or stranger, “Take care” has risen to the top of the list over the last year or so as the standard sign-off when people part.

I’m delighted with this, as I had a colleague at work who had been using it for decades. I have been using it too over the last few years. And now suddenly it has become the fashion. Neither my colleague nor I would claim to have personally caused this to happen single-handedly, but clearly something has made it catch on in the way it has. Is it an example of a “viral”, spread by word of mouth (literally in this case), rather than being pushed by some form of advertising?

I like “Take care” because it implies that the person saying it is really concerned for your wellbeing; they don’t want anything nasty to happen to you. It’s more than just a “Goodbye”; it says “I actually care about you”. It has sincerity.

These “sign-off” phrases have a certain amount of life, then they sink into oblivion. No doubt a PhD could be gained, or at least a BA module, on the study of past favourite phrases. There is plenty of material to search through for evidence, in novels, plays, films and TV dramas. Did people really use “Toodlee

pip” eons ago? Was the now cringe-worthy “See you later, alligator” used without embarrassment in the 1950s? And has “Cheerio”, or its more casual derivative “Cheers”, had its day, along with plain “Goodbye” (memorably used by Robert Robinson), and its diminutives, ‘Bye” and “Byee”? And have we seen the end of “God Bless”?

Some “sign-off” phrases meet their demise by being hijacked by commercial organisations, like “Have a nice day”; they lose their real meaning through endless mechanical repetition, and eventually have to be discarded as cheapened and degraded.

“Take care” will disappear too, to be replaced by something else, now just starting its journey to the top. It probably won’t be the high speed “Bye bye bye bye bye ....” as used by the splendid Ping in “Ed Reardon’s Week”. The replacement will have to be universal in its appeal, not associated with one particular part of society. It will have to be short and make its recipient feel good. It’s a tough brief.

How to end this? Well, it has to be, until it drops out of fashion:

Take care yB

*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. All opinions are the author's own.*

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