

the magazine for town and parish

August 2012

your **Berkhamsted**



Take a wine tour round your local vineyard
Ashridge's best kept secrets
Olympics News

50p

From the Editor August 2012



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

Welcome to the August issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

So, we've had the Diamond Jubilee, the European Football Championships, now we're about to witness the 2012 London Olympics. Let's hope that the meteorological miracle that we witnessed for the Berkhamsted Games happens again for the real thing. Whatever weather we are dealt this month, our local version was a huge success and a fantastic achievement for the organisers and all the children who took part. They did themselves proud.

If you're not going to the Olympics, either through choice or because you were at the mercy of the ticket 'ballot', then there's plenty to keep you occupied in this month's magazine!

As usual it's an eclectic mix: Joanne Lloyd-Evans visits the Frithsden Vineyard (as seen on the front cover), we find out some interesting secrets lurking in Ashridge, and two children from Victoria First School interview our new curate Father Tom Plant. There's also a delicious easy pizza recipe that the kids could make in the Summer holidays when it's wet outside and they're bored.

As always, we'd love to hear from you if you have anything interesting that you would like us to include in future issues.

Helen Dowley, Editor

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Your Berkhamsted Leader by Fr Michael Bowie



It has been very good to welcome Fr Tom Plant and his wife Nao to the parish as Fr Tom begins his curacy with us. I know the town of

Berkhamsted will welcome them too.

For the first year of his time as curate Fr Tom is a *deacon*. In the Church of England, after a year, a deacon is usually ordained a second time, as a *priest*: he or she can then preside at the Eucharist, hear confessions and, in time, lead his or her own parish. Bishops and priests have all been deacons and all of us in ordained ministry remain deacons whatever else lies ahead. The deacon's year, though transitional for most of us, is an important first stage of the journey of ordained ministry, in which we begin to relate to and serve God and the church in a new way.

In his first year Fr Tom will be baptizing children, preaching, working in schools and gaining experience as a school governor, taking communion from the reserved sacrament to those who can't be in church, leading study groups, preparing and leading funeral services, and indeed undertaking most of the tasks that the world associates with 'Vicars'. He will be instantly recognizable by his clerical collar and soon familiar as a 'professional Christian' whether or not he is wearing it. It won't be especially obvious that he is a deacon rather than a priest. But that distinction is an important one

to all of us who remember embarking on ordained ministry. A deacon-on-the-way-to-priesthood is an in-between type of minister, learning what it means to devote one's working life as well as one's personal commitment to Christ, while still being close to another life before ordination.

Fr Tom is a reminder that any of us might be called to be ordained, and that all Christians are called to ministry of some kind. If you are a committed Christian it could happen to you! Clergy come in all shapes and sizes: don't believe you don't fit.

If you would like to know more, there is a day conference in St Albans on 6th October of which I am one of the organisers. It's called **Exploring Priestly Ministry** and there's a note of it on page 11 of this magazine; there will be good speakers, excellent worship and a chance to talk to others; there are cards about it at the back of St Peter's. Why not come and see? *yB*



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Around the town

Art is alive and well in Berkhamsted

From 8th - 30th September, local artists come to the fore, taking part in the Hertfordshire Open Studios event. There will be 39 participants in Dacorum (200 throughout Hertfordshire), ranging across a host of creative work from ceramics and textiles to jewellery and glass sculpture. In Berkhamsted, the Upstairs Gallery (above the Post Office) will feature five local artists, whilst the remainder can be visited and viewed in their home studios across the town. Each year, some 12,000 people take advantage of this opportunity.

.....more details to help you track down the local artistic talent in the next edition!

The Children's Society

Join us for coffee and delicious homemade cakes on Wednesday 5th September 2012 from 10am-12 noon in the Court House by St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted. All proceeds donated to The Children's Society

Oxfam

The Oxfam Children's Wear event for the autumn season will be held at Berkhamsted Civic Centre on Friday 7th September between 9am and 11.30am. Organiser Nicky Evans has been hard at work preparing a superb selection of clothes for the new season for all ages and stages from tinies to teens. There will be toys and games too. Birendra has a whistle. Not so unusual for a 12-year-old boy but he uses it for

an unusual purpose. Before school he watches out for anyone using the bushes instead of the new Oxfam-funded latrines in his village in Nepal. Then he blows his whistle to "name and shame". After that he walks for three hours to get to school.

Failure to use the latrines can lead to contamination of food by flies, polluted water sources and of course there is nowhere to wash your hands. Thanks to Birendra and his fellow members in the children's club, his village is now much cleaner and healthier.

Oxfam has a deserved reputation for its expertise in sanitation and water supply, especially in emergency situations, but it costs money – a latrine costs £50 and a large water tank £3,214.

Supporting the Oxfam Children's Wear event on Friday 7th September will benefit not only children here but also children in desperate circumstances overseas. See you at the Civic Centre between 9am and 11.30am.

Events presented by the Cowper Society

Saturday 8th Sept. at 7:30pm,
CONCERT – Berkhamsted Choral Society directed by Graham Wili.
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Read all about us!

Julian Dawson looks at varied and surprising references to our town in the media

You will forgive me for the indulgence, but my opening gambit is a quote from the *Hemel Hempstead Gazette* which states that Berkhamsted's Petertide Fair is the 'essence of Englishness', and with candy floss, Morris Men and a special Petertide Fair ale from the Tring Brewery it is difficult to argue. Indeed the weather was quintessentially English.

But far from the world of the Petertide Fair, Louisgail's Wordpress blog reports on their experience of residing in Tripoli. "In case you're wondering I'm not in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire where the only thing one has to worry about is whether someone is going to steal your parking space or not." Does that really happen here? Presumably not at the point of an AK47.

In fact, Berkhamsted has a tendency to crop up on all manner of blogs, quite frequently from those travelling through the town on its watery conduit. Nbwrensnest's Wordpress blog opines that "we were very impressed with Berkhamsted (Berko to boaters) with its well kept parks along the canal", though he was less enamoured by Waitrose interestingly enough which apparently was ill-stocked on the day of his visit.

The *Berkhamsted and Tring Gazette* was in a lather of excitement over the arrival of Saharan sand in Northchurch, the explanation for particularly dusty cars recently. Meteorologists were particularly interested that this phenomenon could be spotted by satellite (that's the sand, not Northchurch), and were at pains to point out that Northchurch was not alone in receiving the granular gift from the skies.

Charity escapades often make the internet, and the *Buckinghamshire Examiner* was interested to report on a local man's six mile walk between Hemel Hempstead and

Berkhamsted with his dogs, who apparently are the most pampered canines in the country according to *Bella* magazine. The dogs are treated to designer jackets and regular visits to salons. Not my idea of pampering, but there you go. And whilst we are discussing charities, Oxfam UK's website reported that a first edition of Samuel Beckett's *Murphy* donated to its Berkhamsted shop raised £12,000 at its book auction. A lesson for those too eager to get rid of the contents of their bookshelves.

Ashridge is particularly dear to Londoners recommending walks within reach of the big smoke, (that's London not Watford), and Families Online gushes over the Ashridge Estate with its 'fabulous views and lots of woodland walks ranging from pushchair-friendly surfaced paths to more challenging trails'. Ashridge management college also receives regular coverage, and recently *Hotel Design* was particularly complimentary about the college's Axminster carpet adorning the Wyatt and Scroops rooms. Clearly management techniques may well include advice on how to sweep things under it. And talking of management success, *PRLog* reports on the success of students from Berkhamsted School in winning the Herts Finals of the Young Enterprise Group of the year, and the *Berkhamsted and Tring Gazette* was delighted to report on the teams subsequent victory in the East of England final. And finally SheKicks.net reports on the return of Premier League football to Berkhamsted. The clue is in the website name; Watford ladies will be making use of the Broadwater ground for their home matches, bringing a further sporting attraction to the town. *yB*

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Friends of Ashridge

It's probably raining and blowing another gale as you read this, but it really is summer! How do I know this? because the Friends of Ashridge May plant fair is now a distant memory and we've already set the date for next year's. So if you've never been to this huge event, with 1,000s of plants for sale from private gardens and small commercial growers, make a note of Sunday 12 May 2013. This is the Friends' major fundraising event of the year, this year raising over £6,000 which will be used solely for the upkeep of the National Trust Ashridge Estate.

Despite the weather, Ashridge is still a wonderful place to go for a walk and there are two volunteer-led organised options to choose from.

Brian and Siân Barton lead the Gentle Strolls, up-to-2 hour informal walks observing the wildlife in different parts of the National Trust Ashridge Estate. Dates for the remainder of the season follow: Thursday 12 July 2.30pm, meet large car park opposite Northchurch Common, Map ref SP 977 115.

Monday 20 August 2.30pm, meet Steps Hill grass car park off Beacon Road, Map ref SP 963 159.

Wednesday 19 September 10.30am, meet B4506 road end of Monument Drive, Map ref SP 979 127.

Tuesday 16 October 10.30am, meet B4506 road end of Monument Drive, Map ref SP 979 127.

Stout waterproof footwear recommended.

All welcome - no booking required. £2 per person on the day. More information: 01442 823 727.

Kath Hardy will lead longer walks on the following Saturdays: 14th July, 8th September, 13th October.

All start from the Visitor Centre at 10am and are about 5-6 miles. There's a charge of £3 on the day, no need to book.

National Trust staff also organise a full programme of walks, which you can find on the newly-revamped website: nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge.

And now to really cheer you up, it's never too early to start thinking about Christmas! The 'Ashridge at Christmas' fair is on Sunday 2 December this year, with a great variety of local craftworkers and producers already booked to attend. It all happens around the Visitor Centre by Monument Green, Monument Drive, Ringshall from 10am to 4pm.



Image courtesy of Mary Dodkins

Your Berkhamsted Needs You!

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

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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12.30

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1.30

Lunch in the Deanery (£5) with the bishop and other clergy

2.30

A panel discussion, with question and answer

4.00

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Fr Bernard Minton: bernardminton@aol.com



Dan Parry discovers a secret side of Ashridge

There's long been something magical about Ashridge. When the Shah of Persia arrived at Berkhamsted station in 1889, he was greeted by the Hertfordshire Yeomanry resplendent in their scarlet coats and gleaming, plumed helmets. As the distinguished guest of the 3rd Earl Brownlow, the Shah was escorted to the Earl's splendid home at Ashridge where he was entertained in style, during what was perhaps the grandest period in the history of the present house. It was a time when more than 700 people were employed across an estate that at its maximum size extended for over 14,000 acres, though few of the staff or tenants ever got to see inside the mansion. I was lucky enough to be taken on a guided tour of the house during which I discovered nearly a thousand years of history and learned that, Yeomanry aside, real men join the Watford Underwater Club.

The Hertfordshire Yeomanry apparently weren't available, but Public Relations Manager Chris Johnson stepped in and agreed to show me some of Ashridge's secrets. Built by James Wyatt between 1808 and 1814 in neo-gothic style, the house was constructed in the local Totternhoe stone, a type of dense chalk. It wasn't the fact that the chapel's fibreglass spire was helicoptered into position by the Royal Navy in 1969 that surprised me most, or even the terrifying labyrinth of cellars – in which Chris and I managed to get lost while looking for an ancient crypt. The thing that really took my breath away was a small light bulb. After already having lost quite a bit of breath gazing up into the heart of the stunning 95ft high tower above the entrance hall, I followed Chris down a damp stone staircase leading

beneath the chapel. "The well's in here," he told me. Built miles from a ground-level water source, for centuries Ashridge relied on water drawn from the chalk layers deep below ground.

Here in the well-house lies another Ashridge. Beneath the opulent luxury once enjoyed by the Shah lie the ghostly remains of a priory built in the 1270s by Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, to house a phial of Christ's blood he had lately picked up in Saxony. Dressed in austere grey habits and observing Augustinian doctrine, the Brothers of Penitence protected their holy relic, pursued the advancement of learning and found time to dig an astonishingly deep well. Working by candlelight, they lowered themselves down into the layers of chalk, excavating it to 224ft, a depth that must be seen to be truly appreciated. Gingerly approaching the retaining wall, I leant over and saw that a tiny bulb was recklessly throwing a thin beam of light down to a shimmering, black pool that can't have been far short of Sydney.

The water supply was sufficient for the monks, and in later years the greater estate and the surrounding villages too. But after being abandoned during the nineteenth century the well became clogged with debris. Members of the Watford Underwater Club descended into the shaft during the winter of 1970, cleared the debris and discovered that the water at the bottom was 25ft deep. Water had long been drawn from the well by a winding mechanism powered by animals, first dogs and later donkeys. Indeed it's recorded that in 1530, Henry VIII enjoyed himself making the dogs go as fast as they could.

Today the animals are gone, though the donkey's brace and stall still remain – as does the solid stone architecture built 700 years ago.

Another remaining feature of the priory is the so-called crypt or undercroft. Relieved to have found it after our expedition through the cellars, Chris and I opened its studded, oak door and stepped into the depths of a long-forgotten monastic way of life. Totternhoe stone weathers badly, and outside it can be seen flaking from the building. But here under the house the crypt's clean flagstones, solid pillars and vaulted ceiling looked as though they were built yesterday. Quite how big the priory was or even precisely where it stood remain subject to debate and to help find some answers Chris suggested we venture out into the gardens.

Behind Ashridge, the splendid grounds spectacularly illustrate the peak of nineteenth-century garden design. A wide

lawn runs up to the house itself, though all is not as it seems. Chris explained that the soil here is only two or three inches deep and that beneath it lie the ruined remains of the priory. He showed me an exposed flint wall, recently revealed by the Berkhamsted Archaeological Society, which is believed to have formed part of the original chapel. With the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, Ashridge passed to the Crown and became the occasional home of the three young children of Henry VIII – Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. The house later passed into private ownership and today of course it hosts the UK's leading business school, (11th in the world, according to FT rankings), providing executive education for senior business men and women. The blood of Christ may no longer be found here, but there still remains the treasured corner of Hertfordshire that Edmund envisaged more than 700 years ago.

yB



Olympics in the local area

Matt Dawson

The Olympics are now underway and there is a host of Great British athletes hoping to win medals in their home Olympic Games which start on 27th July and ends on 12th August.

The Olympics has played its part in Berkhamsted and the local area had its own 'Berkhamsted Games' at the start of July which you can read more about in the June issue of *Your Berkhamsted*. This took place on the 5th July in which schools from all around Berkhamsted took part.

The Olympic Torch also came over our way on Sunday 8th July as it passed through Hemel Hempstead. A mixture of people from all over Dacorum took part in the relay in which the flame left

Leverstock Green Road at around 5pm and eventually ended up at Queensway before travelling onto its next destination. The Paralympic torch will pass through Berkhamsted on Wednesday August 29th. However in order to see it you will have to be up very early as it passes through the town at 1.03am. A total of 580 torchbearers, working in teams of five, will cover 87 miles from Stoke Mandeville in Bucks to London over 24 hours.

An athlete to look out for during the Paralympics is Wheelchair basketball player Clare Strange. Clare was born in Buckinghamshire and has been into St Peter's Sunday School on a few occasions and is definitely one to watch as Team GB go for gold in the basketball

event. She is a pretty successful athlete having represented Great Britain at three Paralympic games whilst also winning four European bronze medals, a gold medal at the World Cup in 2011 and also two silver World Cup medals.

JB



Berkhamsted Games 2012

Community Transport Research—we need your views!



Community Transport, traditionally run by local community organisations and charities, puts passengers at the heart of its service by providing a range

of transport services e.g. community cars or minibuses that meet local needs. Many Community Transport schemes run bus routes connecting rural areas with the main towns in an area, social car schemes that provide a door to door service for people unable to access taxis or public transport and hire out their vehicles for use by community groups.

Community Transport schemes play an active role in bringing people together and in doing so help to combat isolation and social exclusion as well as making a contribution to the local economy. Local community transport provider Community Action Dacorum is currently undertaking research into the transport needs of market towns and villages in Dacorum. Please help us to build a picture

of the transport needs for Berkhamsted. We want to know what transport services are being used, the support available to assist you if you are feeling isolated because you don't have your own transport and what transport services you need.

If you are a resident or belong to a community group such as a Residents Association, Day Centre, Club for Older People, Scouts, Sports Clubs or are generally concerned with transport and the needs of your community we want to hear from you.

Please either complete a survey questionnaire online via

www.communityactiondacorum.org.uk

or contact me, Deborah Fogden,

Community Transport Researcher on 01442 253935 or

deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk.

Perhaps you have a coffee morning I could attend? I am happy to talk to you and listen to your views. yB

Bike 'n Hike

Sponsored Bike 'n Hike



**Saturday 8th September
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The *Bike 'n Hike* is an annual fundraising event organised by **Beds and Herts Historic Churches**

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Fr Tom Plant

Two Year 3 children from Victoria School pose some interesting questions to our new curate Fr Tom Plant

How old are you?

33 – quite a special age.

Jesus died when he was 33 and I'm joining my first parish at 33.

Do you have children?

Not yet, but we want to. I have a wife called Nao – she's Japanese.

Do you know the Bible off by heart?

I know the story, though I don't know the whole Bible – not every chapter and verse.

Do you pray everyday?

Yes of course. Every morning and every evening in the church. I take Holy Communion every day, but I find the deepest prayer is in silence.

Do you believe in the Bible story or the Science story?

Both in different ways. I think science explains how it all happens and the Bible explains why it happens. I think they're very different

questions.

Do you baptize babies?

I will, very soon. I've only been at the church for four weeks. Babies can be christened just like the rest of us.

Have you been a curate anywhere else?

No, this is my first parish. Before this I was training for four years in Cambridge.

Are you really a black belt in two different martial arts?

No, I'm a black belt in Kusarigama Jitsu and a brown belt in Aikido and I'm about to start Karate.

You can only do Kusarigama Jitsu at one school in Japan and I'm the only non-Japanese person who's done it.



Fr Tom with Ethan Dowley and Sophie Armstrong

What do you wear?

At work I wear a dress!- a black cassock and a white collar.

On my days off I wear jeans and a t-shirt or a nice shirt.

How often will you come to school?

Most weeks I hope. I'll come in to do assemblies.

Were your parents involved in the church?

My parents aren't very interested in church and I didn't go to church as a child. I don't come from a very churchy family.

What is your favourite Bible?

My favourite one is the King James version for reading out loud.

For reading alone the RSV is my favourite.

I'm also very fond of the work of Shimran who's a medieval Japanese Buddhist writer.

What type of car do you drive?

I've got a very old Ford Fiesta. I sometimes cycle but not when it's raining.

Do you have any pets?

No but my wife and I love dogs.

What's your favourite food?

I really love Indian food. I like a good hot curry, especially a Dansak.

What's your favourite month?

Probably April when Spring starts.

yB



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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 01296 632263 or Jean Wild 866859
1st Tue	Tuesday Club, 7:30pm 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	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 01296 632263 or Jean Wild 866859
3rd Sat	ABC Prayer Breakfast, 8am for breakfast & prayers. Various local churches.
1st Sun	Sundays Together Lunch 12.30pm Court House. For anyone on their own on a Sunday. Liz Jackson 864382

St Peter's

Regular Sunday services

8:00am Eucharist

9:30am Sung Eucharist with crèche, Sunday school and Pathfinders

6:00pm Evensong

6:00pm Sunday 10th June 6:00pm Choral Evensong Corpus Christi

Regular weekday services

Morning Prayer: Monday – Friday 7:30am, Saturday 9:30am.

Eucharist: Monday 6:00pm; Tuesday 9:30am at All Saints' Shrublands Road;

Wednesday 8:00am; Thursday 12:30pm; Saturday 10:00am

Evening Prayer: Monday 5:45pm, Tuesday – Thursday, Saturday 5:00pm

St Peter's

Sat Sept 8th - 7.30pm - Cowper Society presents: Berkhamsted Choral Society concert

Sat Sept 22nd - 7.30pm - Cowper Society presents: Bridgewater Sinfonia concert

Sat Sept 8th - 10am – Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust Sponsored Bike 'n Hike

All Saints'

August 5th Ninth Sunday after Trinity, 10am Morning Worship, Richard Hackworth and Tracy Robinson

August 12th Tenth Sunday after Trinity, 10am Holy Communion, Revd John Kirkby

August 19th Eleventh Sunday after Trinity, 10am Morning Worship, Revd Brian Tebbutt

August 26th Twelfth Sunday after Trinity, 10am Holy Communion, Revd Rachael Hawkins

Baptisms

10th June Emily Sophie Scott (St Peter's)

17th June Gregory Leonard Cummins, Samuel David Bonnett (St Peter's)

Funerals

1st June Jackie Fisher (St Peter's)

22nd June Peter Newland (St Peter's)

14th June Norah Eliza Jane Monk (All Saints')

22nd June Leonard Nathaniel Knopp (All Saints')

Your Berkhamsted Team

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The Revd Rachael Hawkins, All Saints'.

Further information available from our church websites:

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

Joanne Lloyd-Evans visits our local vineyard in Frithsden

Recent years have seen an increase in the status and popularity of English wines, with production being centred across Kent, Sussex and Surrey. However, we also have a winery very close to home. Frithsden Vineyard has been producing wine since 2007, and is tucked away in a peaceful location up a narrow track near the Alford Arms.

Simon and Natalie Tooley moved from Kensal Green in London to Berkhamsted in 2005 and had in mind that they would like to run a vineyard in the area. One weekend, they were out walking with an Ordnance Survey map and noticed that a vineyard was marked on the map in Frithsden. They walked up to take a look, but couldn't find any vines at the property. They knocked on the door of the property's house and discovered that the site had in fact been home to a vineyard from 1971 to 2001. The owners were Peter and Anne Latchford, who were real pioneers of English wine-making and had planted vines back in 1971. They built the house and winery themselves and sold wine from the property, but in 2001, they decided to retire from the wine business and so they pulled up the vines in 2003. With fortuitous timing for the Tooleys, the Latchfords were thinking of selling and moving to a smaller property. When the Latchfords heard about Simon and



Natalie's dream of turning it back into a vineyard and winery, they were thrilled and a private sale was negotiated.

Simon and Natalie did extensive research to determine the best types of grapes to

grow in our challenging climate; which types would resist disease in damp conditions and which could actually grow and ripen with the limited amount of heat and sunshine. They eventually decided upon Solaris, Phoenix and Rondo, names which are unlikely to be familiar to most wine drinkers! Phoenix and Rondo are grown quite commonly in English vineyards, but Solaris is still quite rare at present, as it has only been around for about seven years. It is a newly developed grape type bred from a crossing of Riesling, Pinot Gris and several other grape types. It is good in cold climates and is even grown in Scandinavia. The vines were sourced from Luxembourg, and a team came from there in April 2006 and planted 5,000 vines in just two days. In September 2007, the Tooleys had just enough grapes from the new vines for a small harvest and they produced 400 bottles of wine. In 2008, the flourishing vines produced enough for 4,000 bottles, a ten-fold increase.

Natalie and Simon opened the shop at the vineyard in June 2009, when the 2008 harvest was ready for sale. The shop does

not just sell wine, but also a wide range of gifts and a range of children's clothing that Natalie designs herself. Recently, they have also started offering light lunches and afternoon teas in the terraced area next to the shop, overlooking the vines. Of course, it is also possible to enjoy a glass of wine here too!

The busiest time of the year is during the harvest, which takes place from mid-September to mid-October. Of the three main grape types grown, Solaris ripens the earliest and produces a dry but aromatic white wine. "In September, we need to measure the sugar content of the Solaris grapes daily to know when they are ripe," explained Natalie. "When the sugar levels are high enough, it's a race to get the grapes in before the birds and the wasps get to them. We only know about three days in advance when the harvest will be. When we've decided on the day, we contact everyone we know and we get together a team of about 60 friends and volunteers who come in to help. "The Solaris is all picked on one day, which starts at 10am with tea and biscuits, and then we pick until about 2pm. After that, we have a big barbecue and throw a party for all our helpers that usually goes well into the night."

The Rondo is usually picked on the first weekend of October. This is the red grape that is used to make rose wine by crushing the grapes and leaving the juice with the skins for just long enough to

give the wine its pretty pink colour. The last grape to ripen is the Phoenix, which is picked during mid October, and produces a light white wine in the style of Sauvignon Blanc. All of the wine is made onsite and stays in stainless steel tanks for six months. It is bottled in April and released for sale soon after that.

Owning your own vineyard may sound idyllic, but it can be a tough business. "In a good year, we can make 5,000 bottles of wine, but last year we only made 1,200 because of a bad frost on the 4th of May," said Natalie. "We lost a lot of our grapes because of that frost and then we had a cold, wet, and windy June last year, so the fruit set was bad. April and May are the most stressful times of the year for us, because if we get a late frost once the buds have formed on the vines, it kills them off."

Sparkling wines have been a big success story for England in recent years. In 2010, East Sussex winery Ridgeview's Grosvenor Blanc de Blancs famously beat off competition from major Champagne houses to win in the International Sparkling Wine over £10 category at Decanter's World Wine Awards. At Frithsden, Simon and Natalie have started experimenting with sparkling wine and

have just made their first batch from Seyval Blanc. It is bottle fermented and produced by the same method as champagne.

(continues on page 24)



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“Give us today our daily bread” and the opportunity to visit two windmills in the Chiltern Hills

We expect our supermarkets to sell loaves, probably without our thoughts of their origin. Bread has been a staple of life for mankind with the need to crush the husk of grains. Even today we have a variety of ways to produce flour, varying from primitive pounding with a pestle and mortar to the modern rollers of huge machines. A mill stone rotating over another fixed below was the way over centuries. We have always sought ways to save energy. Our engineers in this century are exploring ways of using the energy in waves and wind as alternatives to oil and gas. Witness wind farms and the prospective Severn barrage.

At the time of the Domesday Book water mills with their streams and rivers were a source of energy, a part of rural life. Windmills had yet to be developed in Europe. Authenticated examples of windmills in England are as early as 1200 AD, initially as post mills, followed later by tower mills. A post mill has its sails and mechanisms supported on a massive post. A tower mill has a cap which supports the sails and the mechanism for turning the sails into the wind.

Windmills and watermills, often close by each other, became the rural sources of flour and animal feed in the middle ages. It has been estimated that there were up to 10,000 mills in towns and hamlets across the nation. As in Holland, windmills were used for drainage, notably about 2,000 to keep the Fens drained, creating fertile land.

Tended land and windy heights made the Chilterns ideal for windmills to satisfy the food needs of a growing population. Thanks to the National Trust and the Chilterns Society we have restored examples of a post mill at Pitstone and a tower “smock” mill at Lacey Green. Both are believed to be the oldest of their types, the post mill dates to 1627 and the smock mill to 1650 AD.

The Pitstone Windmill near Ivinghoe, a post mill, represents the early form of windmill construction with the machinery balanced on the head of a massive wooden post. The Lacey Green Windmill, a smock mill, is an early example of windmill design. Smock mills became larger and more efficient and, for example, wooden gears were partially replaced by iron. Lacey Green has remnants of these early mechanisms for turning the cap of the mill to bring the sails into the wind.

A visit to the mills is a fascinating reminder of how our forebears lived, dependent on wind and water, and how windmills evolved using 17th century wooden machinery. Inside the mills, visitors can climb up the wooden ladders to each of the floors, with explanations of how a windmill worked. Both windmills have rural history amid beautiful scenery, a bonus to an enjoyable and informative visit.

(continues on page 25)

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Frithsden Vineyard

(continued from page 21)

“We only have about 300 bottles of it, as we don’t have many Seyval Blanc vines. It is lovely, but the vineyard is fully planted at the moment, so if we decide to grow more Seyval, we would need to pull up some of the other vines.”

Natalie and Simon sell the vast majority of wine through their cellar door and due to the very small 2011 vintage, this year they are not selling through third parties, so the only ways to get your hands on their wines are to visit the cellar door or the Berkhamsted Sunday market, at which Simon sometimes provides tastings and sales.

A wide range of events are held at the vineyard throughout the year, from a

Summer Fete to a Spanish Evening. Upcoming events include a Curry Evening on 11th August and an Autumn Fayre on 20th October.

Frithsden Vineyard is located up the Roman Road in Frithsden and is signposted from near the Alford Arms. It is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm from March to December (11am-6pm during summer) for wine tastings and purchases and for light lunches and afternoon teas. If you would like to volunteer to help at harvest time or to find out more information about special events or private functions, please contact Natalie and Simon at info@frithsdenvineyard.co.uk or on 01442 878 723.

yB

(continued from page 23)

All you need to know about opening times, entry cost, and how to get to Pitstone and Lacey Green is below and on web sites. Please take the opportunity to enjoy visits, the volunteers look forward to meeting you.

Visiting

Pitstone Windmill

1st June to 31st August on Sundays and bank holidays from 2.30pm to 6.00pm. Last admission 5.30pm.

Adults £2, Children £1, Family £5.

National Trust members free.

.Location: beside the B488 near the south of the village of Ivinghoe. Postcode HP4 1LT

Web site www.nationaltrustorguk/pitstonewindmill. Info.01442 851227



Lacey Green

1st May to 30th September on Sundays and bank holidays from 2.00pm to 5.00pm

Adults £2, Children 5-15, £1. Chiltern Society members free.

Location: leave Princes Risborough on the A4010 south taking the sign to Lacey Green on the left into Woodway to reach The Whip Inn and Pink Road

Post Code HP27 0PG

Web site www.laceygreenwindmill.org.uk

Windmill enquiries 01844 275871

yB



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Bluebella Roo's

There are a few things that make Berko such a great town. Not least is the High Street where interesting and different independent shops and eateries add spice to the more usual well-known names. The latest of these is Bluebella Roo's, an intimate (only 17 covers) fine dining restaurant tucked away on the small road leading to Victoria School. I thought I'd better sample the food (any excuse!!) before finding out what lies behind this new venture. What a lovely surprise! My dinner was brilliant - I could have been in a top Central London restaurant- and the service was efficient and fun. Food style is modern British with European influences; interesting combinations and good portions.

So, having established that this is a great addition to Berko eateries, I thought I should find out who and what lies behind it. Three people. Mat the chef, Kate his partner and Matt front of house. They first worked together at the Foresters in Farnham Common, found that they clicked as a unit, and seized the opportunity in Berko when it came up. Their vision is to offer high quality cuisine in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. There are no double sittings with pressure to vacate tables; your booking is for the evening. The only exceptions to this are the Rex pre-cinema suppers available Tuesday to Thursday from 6-7.30pm.

Why Bluebella Roo's? Turns out these are the two nicknames of Mat's daughter, whose real name, just to confuse things, is Tallulah! I like the name; it reflects the spirit of the restaurant, different and fun.

Mat always suspected that Berkoites would not be easy to please, but even he is surprised how clued up we all are. Comments back so far have been of the "superb" variety, and, if my personal experience is anything to go by, Bluebella Roo's will be a wonderful addition to our vibrant High Street.

Ps - as this edition of the magazine hits the streets, judging will be taking place to see who will be enjoying lunch for two at Bluebella Roo's as winner of our 140th anniversary competition. *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).

E-mail editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Quick Tricolore Pizza

Joanne Lloyd Evans

I am a bit hesitant in proposing a pizza recipe in case any Italian should read this, as I know they often have very strong views on pizza and I couldn't call myself a pizza traditionalist.



I will even confess to liking a Hawaiian pizza from time to time. But nevertheless, I am going to risk it as I think this is a delicious, quick and easy recipe. I prefer to make my own base rather than buy it, and I usually just use this very simple recipe that is made without yeast, so it only takes two minutes to prepare.

Pizza base (quantity serves two hungry adults):

200g self-raising flour

A large pinch of salt

2 tbsp olive oil

160ml warm water

Topping

Tomato ketchup, puree or pasta sauce to spread over the base

100g cheddar cheese, coarsely grated

2 large ripe tomatoes, sliced into rounds

1 small courgette, thinly sliced

Packet of mozzarella cheese, sliced into

rounds

A small bunch of basil, chopped

Preheat the oven to 210C.

To make the base, sift the flour and the salt into a bowl. Combine the oil and the water in a jug and then mix into the flour. Knead it for a few minutes. It should be soft but not sticky, so add more flour if it is too wet or more water if it seems too dry. Roll out the dough into the desired shape (you can make large or small pizzas, round or square) and place onto a greased baking tray.

Spread the base with tomato ketchup (or alternative) and then sprinkle with the grated cheese. Arrange the tomato and courgette slices on top, and then finally the mozzarella. Pop the pizza into the oven for 15 minutes, scatter the basil over the top and then serve!


JB


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The Last Word—A ride in the Grand Union Canal

by M. Lane

On one of our recent visits to see our daughter, son in law and grand children in Berkhamsted my wife and I decided to borrow their two bikes gathering dust in the garage and take a ride to Tring along the Grand Union canal.

Of course both bikes had flat tyres after standing so long and our first job was to take a car ride to the nearest bike shop to purchase a puncture outfit. This done we carried out the repairs and checked the bikes' brakes etc. We didn't want any mishaps. Sandwiches previously packed and my recently new £600 SLR camera secured in the ruck sack along with some cash, sun cream and various other items, we were ready for our ride.

It could not have been better. The sun was shining, there was a gentle breeze and it was already quite warm even though it was not yet 10am. We were soon on our way along the canal tow path, admiring the various narrow boats as we went. The birds were singing, there was the usual statue-like heron waiting patiently for a meal and even a few squirrels scurrying into the undergrowth as we approached. The original metallised track had become a little more uneven as we got more into open country and it was considerably narrower and so concentration was more important.

Normally whenever I cycle with my wife she rides her bike in front. It's almost a superstition based on the fact that on several occasions when I've ridden in front I have some sort of encounter with another vehicle or other accident.

However, since we were not on the road on this occasion we broke the rule.

The path by now was really quite narrow and had pieces of flint protruding through its surface which bothered me in case my wife hit one and came off. No sooner had this occurred to me than I found myself airborne and heading straight into the canal. I remember the splash as I hit the water and then what seemed really slowly, I sank to the bottom through the distinctly green soup. On the way down I thought "I wonder how deep this is". I soon found out when I stood up and was still under water. Swimming back to the bank my alarmed wife said "I've been shouting you". To which I replied "I couldn't hear you my ears were full of water". Strange what people say in unusual situations.

Having reached the bank we both exclaimed "The bike!". "Oh no" I thought, "that means going back to the bottom of the canal to recover it." This proved easier than expected and I returned to the bank only to realise it was covered in stinging nettles which took their revenge on my arms and legs as I clambered out. I was pretty wet and a little smelly and stinging in places I'd forgotten existed but the weather was by now hot and so drying out while we ate sandwiches would be no problem. Sandwiches! Of course they were in the ruck sack still on my back. We opened it up and unsurprisingly they were ruined, but worse still my new camera was also in there. Removing it from the bag I opened it up to find it full of water. Still, there wasn't a lot we could do and so we decided to sit in the sunshine and dry out.

This didn't take too long but in light of the fact that we had no lunch and I was a bit smelly we decided to abandon the trip to Tring and return from where we had come.

Amazingly the camera which soon dried out still worked and the bike I had borrowed was cleaner than when we set off. After a shower, a change of clothes and a good dowsing of TCP we had some lunch and vowed that in future we stick to the rule that I ride at the back.

By the way, if anyone has lost a size 9 trainer I know where it is, though it is very wet and covered in green slime with the odd minnow swimming in and out.

yB

Write the last word

The last word is available for readers to send in approx. 500 or 900 - 1000 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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