

Berkhamsted *review*

In this issue

January 1996

The meaning of
Epiphany

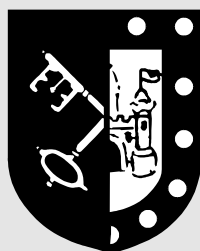
Modern lights;
ancient wells

A Grand Old
Canal

The church's
organisation

Linking hands
with Gambia

This month's
Events



for Town and Parish **25p**



The Parish Magazine of St Peter's with All Saints'

Welcome to the first issue of the *Berkhamsted Review* for 1996.

You'll see we've made some changes to the magazine - a new cover and a new format. You will find many familiar articles included though we have rearranged pages to make finding information easier. Much of this has been done in response to the readership survey we carried out in October last year, which suggested that you'd like a more lively magazine, with parish and town information more clearly laid out and wider ranging editorial covering both church and secular matters. This issue contains only some of the changes we plan to make - over the next few months you will see more. Please let us know what you think!

Partly as a result of our new 'in-parish' facilities we now use to produce the Review, we can now include photographs in the magazine to supplement the editorial. As they say, a picture speaks a thousand words. Many of you are keen photographers - let us have examples of interesting subjects from around the parish for inclusion in later issues. And do please keep interesting articles coming in!

In this month's issue...

Around the Town with John Cook

Modern floodlighting and ancient wells attract John's attention.

A Day to Remember

Jean Wild is with St Peter's Choir at the Festival of Remembrance.

Jerusalem Botanical Gardens

A look by **Rosemary Armstrong** at an unusual working holiday in Israel.

Linking Hands with Gambia

An emotive story from **Libby Grundy**, recently returned from a visit to Gambia.

Allotments

Ian McCalla comments on a topic under scrutiny in the local press.

A Grand Old Canal

A brief history of one of Berkhamsted's main landmarks by **Stephen Halliday**.

... and the usual news and reviews from around the Parish

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Responsibility for opinions expressed in articles and letters published in this Review and for the accuracy of any statements in them rests solely with the individual contributor

Next Copy Dates (all Fridays): 5 January 2 February 8 March



**Father Basil
Jones writes
about
Epiphany.**

review leader

Christmas is not quite over. The wise men have still to come to the stable and then go out into the world. At St Peter's and at All Saints' we shall celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, 7th January, when the wise men will be placed in the Crib.

But the showing of Christ to the world has as much to do with us and the way we live our lives as it had to the wise men of old. For some people it will be on the boundaries of science with all of the moral problems involved. For others it will be holding firm to all that is good in family or community life or seeing for the first time something of the wonders of God's world with its infinite possibilities and complexities. But for some of us we can, as it were, be crouching in the corner of the Stable and allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the worship offered by the three wise men, Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

As they offered their gifts so may we offer ours, however tarnished, then they can be added to those of the wise men, so that Christ may be better manifested to the world. ❖



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Subscribers!

Please remember that subscriptions are now due (still only £2.50 for a full year - twelve copies). If paying by cheque, please make it payable to *Berkhamsted Review*.

Cheques or cash should be handed to your distributor or to Daphne Montague (27 Hill View, Berkhamsted, HP4 1SA)

Cover Illustration: *The Tower of St Peter's Church. St Peter's is the largest parish church in Hertfordshire. Dating from the 13th century, the Tower contains a ring of eight bells which have been regularly rung for the last 150 years. An article on bellringing at St Peter's appeared in last month's magazine.*

Photo: Chris Smalley

We would like to feature reader's photographs, drawings and watercolours of local subjects on the cover of future issues of the *Review*. See page 20 for details.

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ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Eric Brown describes the important changes taking place in the church and how it affects us in Berkhamsted.

AFTER THE GREAT DEBATE concerning the ordination of women and its acceptance by a substantial majority of members of the Church of England discussions have moved on to other matters which are going to have a profound effect upon the organisation and financing of the Church at National, Diocesan, Deanery and Parish levels. I should like to briefly mention a few of these, with the intention of encouraging church goers and others to take an active interest in these new issues and the debates which surround them.

At the top level there is a proposal to create a National Council of up to seventeen people which would take an overview of the needs and resources of the whole Church giving the House of Bishops more time to develop a vision for the Church. The General Synod, to whom the National Council would be accountable, would continue to be the elected law-making and debating body, though it is proposed that it should not be the executive body it is now. The proposers of these changes would also like to see the demise of the Church Commissioners who did themselves and the Church no good in losing many millions of pounds in recent years through

unwise investment decisions. They believe that the Church needs a more up to date management structure to cope with all that the new millennium will bring, in what are bound to be times of increased financial needs and declining traditional sources, particularly in investment income. To those who opposed such proposals in the initial debate in the General Synod, the Church of England should not be trying to take any leaves out of the latest management folders in circulation in the business world.

At the Diocesan level we in St Albans are also experiencing change. A new Bishop has been appointed, Christopher has replaced John, and is in post and working and will be consecrated in the Abbey on January 20th. It is proposed to divide the existing over-large Hertford Archdeaconery (Bedford is the other) into East and West and appoint a further Archdeacon who will be responsible for the administration of the East Hertford Deanery. Archdeaconeries are divided into Deaneries and there have been changes at this level in recent years which affect us. The old, long and narrow Berkhamsted Deanery extended from way out in the Vale of Aylesbury through the Tring gap and along the old A41 almost to Watford. A new Deanery, that of Hemel Hempstead has been carved out of it and our Deanery is now much more compact and internally coherent. Deaneries matter much more now than they ever did for two reasons.

First, the appointment of incumbents is a much more democratic process than previously. Not only is the relevant parish involved at all levels but the Diocese requires that the Deanery is consulted and that serious attention is paid to the overall disposition of clergy within the Deanery. Two vacancies at Wigginton and Aldbury have recently been filled by the appointment of one priest. The positions at St Peters and All Saints are still vacant and have been joined by Little and Great



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Thanks and Appreciation

THE YEAR 1995 will be remembered for a number of differing reasons by all of us. Especially for those who worship at St. Peter's and All Saints', the departures of Father Roger and Father Matthew will have been major events. We give thanks for their ministries and much has been said and written about them already. We just hope and pray that 1996 will not be remembered as the year when we were without an incumbent and without a curate!

In expressing thanks and appreciation, there is always a fear that somebody will be missed out unintentionally. If that is the case here, we can only apologise.

From the front cover to the back, the reader will notice changes to the *Review*. Gone is the front cover drawing by Harry Sheldon. For this absence in particular we owe readers an explanation. Our new method of producing the magazine means that photographs can now be accommodated. Sensing that Harry is very busy with his many commitments, we offered him the opportunity to "retire" from the task of drawing for us each month. He accepted! The editors especially know how dedicated and diligent Harry has been in undertaking these drawings; he reminded us that it was "Review time" again each month and his

contributions were always ready and, needless to say, beautifully presented. On behalf of our readers and everybody associated with this magazine, our grateful thanks to Harry for all that he has done for us; we greatly appreciate his creativity.

During 1995, Jim Pullen ceased to be Advertising Manager for the *Review*. Anyone who has studied the accounts will appreciate the contribution which advertising revenue makes for this publication. It goes without saying - but it should not be forgotten - that we owe Jim enormous thanks for his dedicated work over many years.

Behind every great man...! Vera Pullen has been secretary to successive Rectors of Berkhamsted and with the departure of Father Roger, Vera has retired from her duties. Perhaps, she may have felt the position was a thankless job - so often those not in the limelight are not noticed. However, we want to add our thanks and appreciation for Vera's long tour of duty.

In conclusion, many people will know that our editor, David Woodward, has recently undergone a major heart operation. At the time of going to press, he is recovering but it will be some time before he is fully restored to health. We look forward to that time and wish him, Pauline and his family well. ❖

Administrative Changes in the Church of England (continued from page 5)

Gaddesdens which are to become one parish with one priest.

The second big change is in the way that the Diocese collects that part of its income from the Parishes, the old Quota. All Parishes now have a *Parish Share*, the size of which reflects numbers on the Electoral Roll and the number of Communicants but also the giving potential of the Parish. The definition of such a factor is proving to be a difficult

nut to crack. The Deaneries have been given the task of ironing out the inevitable differences there are between what Parishes perceive to be fair. What is certain is that within a year or two Parishes will have to bear all the salary costs of any priest they may wish to see appointed to their midst. But then other churches have been doing just that for years. ❖

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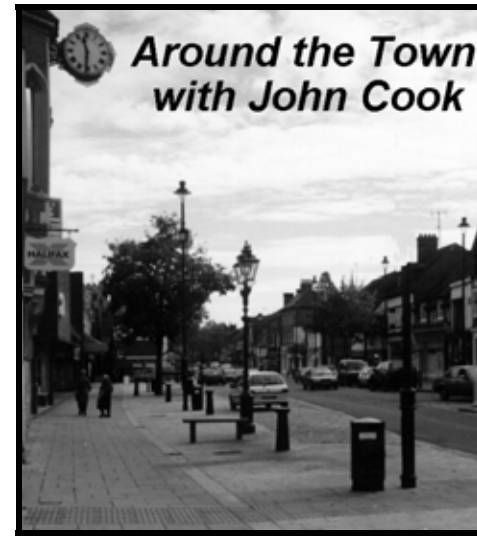
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Berkhamsted Butchery

Recent references to the Tompkins family of butchers has prompted Mrs Helen Spittle to write me a most interesting letter - too long to reproduce here but full of fascinating references to the more recent history of the Town.

She tells me that she is the great granddaughter of Emily and Thomas Tompkins who had the butcher's shop opposite the Kings Arms - presumably before it became Goddens - with their own slaughterhouse at the back on the other side of Church Lane. In their family archives they have a bloodthirsty photograph of men standing over the carcasses leaning on their axes.

The most recent one to follow the family trade was Tommy Tompkins who ran the butchers shop in Gravel Path until he retired to Norfolk where he died only last year. A highlight of his career was to be put in charge of the Coronation ox roast in the playing fields by the canal.

As to the field behind the Girls' School, Mrs Spittle's aunt, Madge Tompkins, kept her horses there, and while it may have been known as Tompkins Meadow in the Town, to Mrs

Spittle's family it was always 'Auntie Madge's Field'.

Light at Night

The latest pressure group for some special feature of the environment concerns itself with what it calls *light pollution*. They say that we generate too much surplus electric light out of doors nowadays and this is blotting out the beauty of the night sky and wasting energy.

Certainly the amount of outside lighting has greatly increased over the years, and this is particularly noticeable to those of us who can remember the blackout during the war when there were no street lights, windows had to be heavily curtained and what cars there were could only use shaded headlights. Now on a clear night from a high point in the Town such as the top of Swing Gate Lane you can see a great orange glow in the sky from the lights of Hemel Hempstead, and smaller ones over Chesham and Tring.

Berkhamsted contributes its share of light pollution, if that's what you want to call it, particularly since we have had the floodlighting along the High Street. A few years ago there was no regular floodlighting, but for some time now the handsome row of buildings opposite Castle Street has been lit up at night and since last year powerful public floodlighting has been directed at St Peter's Church (on three sides), the Town Hall and the little clock tower over the fish shop on the corner of Lower King's Road. All this may be light pollution to some but to my eye it greatly contributes to the Town centre's attractiveness after dark.

But the most effective lighting round about is at Ashfidge House, where the architecture looks quite enchanting under the fairly subdued floodlighting there. Why not drive out and have a look at it; but do watch out for the deer on the road after dark, particularly at this time of year. They have no road sense whatsoever and are difficult to see.

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Floodlighting in the High Street

Reminders of Cowper

The portraits of three notable worthies used to hang in the Town Hall building and have now been re-hung there following the virtual completion of the restoration of the Great Hall. One is a large oil painting of William Cowper, which Joan Morris generously arranged to have professionally restored. Although it is only a copy it is an impressive piece of art, and looks well in its new setting. Cowper's cloak perfectly matches the new curtains.

Ashridge Flora and Fauna

If you do drive through Ashridge Park you will pass the turning to Woodyard Cottage, and on the other side of the road at this point is an area of woodland known as Harding's Rookery. I heard this described the other day as the finest stand of young beech trees in the south of England.

This statement was made in a talk given by Graeme Canon, the young and enthusiastic Scot who is the National Trust's warden for the Ashridge Estate. He also pointed out that in among these beeches are some Spanish chestnut trees which are about 400 years old and might well have been planted by monks when Ashridge was a monastery.

Before reaching Hardings Rookery you pass Frithesden Beeches, which up until about 200 years ago were regularly pollarded for fuel. Now, because of the amount of dead wood in these ancient trees they are a breeding ground for invertebrates, some of them of international rarity.

I imagine many visitors in the past looking for local memorabilia of the famous poet would have sought out this picture in the old Institute rooms there, perhaps after visiting the site of the original Rectory where he was born, and Cowper's Well.

A little while ago I mentioned that St John's Well in Berkhamsted was a place of pilgrimage in the 14th century. Five centuries later another one - Cowper's Well - also used to pull in the faithful. This was the well in the Rectory garden from which Cowper would have got his water as a boy, but hardly worth making too much fuss about, you might have thought, even if you were a great Cowper fan.

It was covered by a substantial structure which housed the winch-gear, and fixed to this was a large stone plaque with a rather syrupy piece of home-spun verse in praise of Cowper inscribed on it. The well presumably fell into disuse when mains water came to the Town, was then

For many people November 11th 1995 will be one to reflect on the last 50 years and to remember those who were lost in the wars. The atmosphere in the Royal Albert Hall at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance in the presence of the Queen and Royal Family will surely stay with the seven members of St Peter's Church Choir who were privileged to be among only one of four church choirs from the country to take part on that day.

The morning was spent practising, watching the events in the arena including members of the Royal Navy climbing the mast, the Maori and Tara dancers. the procession of standards and Royal British Legion repre-

Jean Wild reflects on

A DAY TO REMEMBER

"REMEMBRANCE"

*Red for the poppies in the fields,
Evermore remembered,
Men died dreadful deaths,
Evermore remembered,
Memories of loved ones lost,
Bang of the cannon signals the silence,
Red for the blood of the dying,
Atmosphere of stillness,
Never to be forgotten,
Choirs singing hymns of hope,
Evermore remembered.*

sentatives, the television camera crews darting about, with everyone observing the two minute silence at 11 am. After a long period

of rehearsing we were able to relax before the afternoon and evening performances to a packed Albert Hall.

The procession for the service, lead by head chorister, Alasdair Wild, moved slowly down the uneven steps, across the arena to the singing of the hymn *Dear*

Lord and Father of Mankind forgive our foolish ways..... The feelings of us all were echoed by a poem (*left*) written by Christopher Judd, one of the choirboys.

Our thanks go to the Royal School of Church Music for inviting us on such a memorable occasion.

About the Town (con't from page 10)

filled in and all evidence of it lost except for the plaque which was saved, mounted on a plinth and a sundial set up beside it.

I have just been looking at a photograph taken in 1902 of the then Cowper Society (no connection with the present one) in their bowlers and top hats being shown the plaque by the Rector. Now the plaque too has disappeared, but the remains of the sundial are still there.

From another old photograph the badly weathered inscription on the plaque can just be made out. The last lines are:

*'O stranger in your heart of hearts let
tender reverence dwell,
And love of love revived today at
gentle Cowper's Well'.*

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BESSIE was in many ways a truly remarkable person. She was born in a mining village near Wakefield and was very proud of being a Yorkshire woman. She was very direct, honest and completely trustworthy.

Bessie did very well at school and went on to Wakefield Girls' High School and then to Leeds University where she read English (not History as stated in her obituary in the Gazette.) Her mother died when Bessie was only seven, and her grandmother moved in to keep house for her father, younger brother and herself.

She thoroughly enjoyed her life at Leeds University and it was whilst she was there that she became a staunch Christian and a member of the Church of England. Later she became an oblate of the Benedictine Convent, St.Mary's Abbey, West Malling, Kent. It is a very beautiful place, and on the two occasions that Jim and I took her down to the Abbey years ago, we were struck by the sense of peace and tranquility there.

Before coming to Victoria School as Headmistress Bessie was Head of a small village school at Parsons Heath, Colchester, and the friends she made there, and at Leeds, remained friends to the end of her long life. Indeed she was blessed with a tremendous circle of friends who kept in touch with her always.

In September 1958 when Bessie came to Victoria School it was the largest Infant and Junior School in the County. Later when it was decided that Berkhamsted should have the Three-Tier System of education, which meant we should have three Middle Schools in the town, Bessie and I were both members of 'The Proposers Committee' and she sensibly insisted that the second Middle School to be build must be a Church School, as we would have two Church First Schools -

A TRIBUTE TO BESSIE GASCOIGNE

Vera Pullen pays tribute to a remarkable member of the Parish.

Victoria and St.Mary's Northchurch to feed into it. Thus Thomas Bourne School was built, and though we now have just two Middle Schools in the town, Thomas Coram is the successor to Thomas

Bourne, and we still have a Church Middle School.

I remember on one occasion the children from Victoria School were assembling for a service in St Peter's, and there was the usual bustle and noise as they settled down. Bessie just stood up, put one finger up, and there was instant silence!

She faithfully followed the Benedictine Rule and read the offices every day. She was a prayerful woman - as I have discovered since she died in reading the notes and prayers she left behind. She was highly intelligent and had a remarkable library of literally thousands of books. These showed her continuing interest in life today. Latterly she was greatly disturbed at what was happening in the Church of England, and was a member of Forward in Faith. Her great friend, Fr Graham Leonard, one time Bishop of London, and his wife became Roman Catholics and it was a great sadness to her that she felt too old to change. It was a great deprivation to her when she could no longer be brought to St.Peter's, though she appreciated the Sacrament being taken to her by Fr Roger, and later by Fr Basil. She was very independent and it was hard for her at first to accept the care she needed for the last year of her life, but she was very grateful for all the help she received and I have nothing but praise for those who helped her up in the morning and put her to bed at night. For many years the Guides had a rota and two went

AS OUR DUSTY CONVOY of cars rounded the corner, the first thatched roofs of Tujereng came into view. As far as our eyes could see, the road was lined with children, women, men all waving, cheering and dancing on the edge of the road. Hundreds of smiling faces, hundreds of hands reached out to draw us into the village. This was an African welcome for eight English teachers. By the time we came to a stop, we were choking back the tears. This was the Africa which doesn't hit the headlines, and from the very first moment I was hooked!

Earlier this year several schools in Hertfordshire, of which St Thomas More primary school in Berkhamsted was one, committed themselves to establishing and sustaining a link between their schools and a school community in Tujereng, Gambia, with a view to a long-term exchange of culture, ideas and support. I was lucky to be part of the first group of teachers who visited Tujereng at half term to establish the link, get to know the people and assess the needs of the school.

Gambia is a very small country in West Africa. It is 90 percent Moslem, with pockets of Christianity in different parts of the country. It is one of the poorest countries in the world. Infant mortality is high and life expectancy short. Tujereng is an old, agricultural village virtually untouched by tourism and other aspects of westernisation. It has no electricity or running water. Sanitation is

LINKING HANDS WITH GAMBIA

Libby Grundy recounts an emotional visit to West Africa.



basic, although I was still able to have two 'baths' a day. Standing in a basin of cool well water under a pale, early-morning African sky, listening to cockerels crowing, and the rhythmic thud of rice being pounded, takes a lot of beating!

The people are extremely poor, and their material needs are obvious. It was very humbling to see our gifts of second-hand T-shirts, bars of Tesco soap, cheap pens and bags of jelly babies being so gratefully received. I felt ashamed to be part of the developed world which has exploited this country in the past and profited from its resources.

While we were there we each lived as members of a host family. We ate well on their staple diet of fish, rice, groundnuts and fruit. We shared some domestic tasks and learnt to draw water from the well (women only!) We learnt what it was like to be part of an extended family.

A 'link' committee, democratically appointed by the villagers, gave up their time to look after us. They were totally committed to making the 'link' work and to improving the lot of the young people in the village. Everywhere we went, we were greeted with a friendliness, warmth and enthusiasm that was overwhelming. The material deprivation is shocking to western eyes, but in terms of the richness of family and community life, respect for the individual and religious tolerance we have a great deal to learn.

Tujereng has a very youthful population. Polygamy is normal and contraception not widely used. Most of the children, but not all, attend the village primary school which has 630 children, split into 12 classes. Few parents pay the termly textbook rental of 75p, and I saw 7 textbooks being shared between 43 children. Most teaching is done from the board and the children learn by rote and repetition. The classrooms are cramped and dark. Some of the conditions in the school upset us deeply.

Despite the huge classes and total lack of resources, the teachers were grappling with the same professional problems that we have in our well-equipped and well-supported schools. The children were eager to learn, proud of their work and

new friends and been warmly received into the community. I have a host of wonderful memories, but I hope I will never forget our first day.

We sat in a circle with the village elders under the sacred baobab tree and prayed together for a successful and long-lasting relationship between Tujereng and Hertfordshire. May God or Allah hear our prayer.



well-behaved. We felt we wanted to give them everything. The school needs rubbers, pencils, pens, paper, textbooks, reading books, teaching aids, toilets, solar panels and a library. *Anything* we can do to help will make a difference.

On the day of our departure tears were shed on both sides. We had made many

If you feel you would like to help redress the balance between their world and ours and help these wonderful children to have a fairer start in life - by child sponsorship, donation or simply by saving old T-shirts and candles, please give Libby Grundy a ring for further information on 875814.

Tribute to Bessie Gascoigne (continued from page 13)

every Saturday morning to do some extra shopping for her and she did appreciate this, and the contact with the young generation.

Though she was often in pain and uncomfortable I never once heard her

complain, and I never once heard her say anything unkind about anyone. She was greatly loved by all her friends and will be greatly missed.

review personalities

97: Jean Green
Newly-appointed Parish Secretary



*Thank you,
John and Pam!*

IT WAS A FORTUNATE DAY when John and Pam Macpherson, with their three young daughters came to settle in Berkhamsted in 1974. They came from the Caribbean where John had worked for the Commonwealth Secretariat for some years. This work continued from the London office with visits to many parts of the Commonwealth until his retirement a few years ago.

A house move in 1976 brought them into the parish of Great Berkhamsted - and to their parish church, where they hoped to sit quietly in the back row (according to John!). That was not to be as John was 'head-hunted' by Jim Pitts-Tucker to act as Deanery Synod secretary! This was an unfamiliar world as John and Pam had for long been associated with the Presbyterian church in the West Indies, so John brought a fresh mind to local Anglican affairs.

What was to prove a very significant step came in 1982 when John was accepted for the St Alban's Diocesan Ministerial Training Scheme (a three year course). This eventually led to ordination as deacon in 1989 and as priest in 1990. So retirement saw a rich new phase of life opening up as an assistant priest in the parish.

John has exercised a wide-ranging ministry, not only in conducting regular church services but also in St Francis' hospice and in local nursing homes. He has had a deep involvement with monthly

healing services at St Peter's. One of his special interests has been in fostering house groups which he had hoped could have grown in number more readily.

Twice in the past three years John undertook locums of several months each in Antigua and Montserrat where conditions are very different from those in Berkhamsted. He has also taken an active part in the links between St Alban's diocese and Caribbean parishes.

In all this John has been most ably assisted and supported by Pam. We are greatly indebted to Pam for her vital part in the establishment of the Hospice of St Francis. The idea came from and was fostered by a prayer group which she led and it was through her inspirational leadership and persistent hard work that this valued facility was established.

It was through Pam's initiative also that the Sunday lunch club for those living alone became a popular monthly event and continues to flourish.

John and Pam will be living in Sussex for a while until they find a suitable house near their daughters in St Alban's. We shall miss them but we wish them Godspeed and look forward to seeing them from time to time when they have settled in St Alban's.

Marjorie Bowden



**A Very Happy New Year
to All Our Readers**



Rosemary Armstrong tells of an unusual holiday in Israel with a horticultural theme.

Jerusalem Botanical Gardens

FOR SOMETHING OF A DIFFERENT WAY of seeing the Holy Land and improving your gardening skills at the same time you can consider working in the Botanical Gardens which are situated by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The gardens cover 65 acres and represent various sections of the world.

Maintenance is a continuing problem; hence the current programme of two-week working holidays for the dedicated British gardener. Small groups go out in March and October to help Dr. Michael Avishai - the garden Director - keep the Gardens in good order.

The fortnight holiday consists of nine full working days - three days in each of three different plant collections in the garden - and four days of travel and sight-seeing. It is a wonderful experience!

The Old City of Jerusalem is divided into four Quarters - Christian, Jewish, Armenian and Moslem. This area has very narrow streets which haven't changed over the centuries. There are many little shops and hard bargaining is very much the thing to do.

We visited the mountain fortress of Masada which looms magnificently over the desolate landscape on the edge of the

Dead Sea. This lies at the bottom of the Great Syrian Rift Valley with the beautiful mountains of Jordan in the background. There is no life to be found in the Dead Sea where the water consists of 36 percent salt; the life on the land must adapt to this terrible blasting furnace of salt. The Sea is famous for its therapeutic properties and is particularly effective in the treatment of skin disorders. It is very pleasant to float in the Sea but the swimmer should be very careful to keep the water out of the eyes; this really a must for everyone.

A visit to the Sea of Galilee was another day's outing. We went from Jerusalem via Jericho, passing up the valley where the thriving plantations of bananas, pineapples, dates and cotton all seemed very lush while in other areas the land was barren. One is able to see the frontier of Jordan as one nears Galilee; it is only a few feet away at some points. At Bet She An there are the remains of a Roman theatre and of a monastery with mosaic floors. Archaeology plays a large part in the historical study of Israel.

Yardenit, where the Jordan River leaves the Sea of Galilee, is the site where tradition claims that Jesus was baptised by John. Many pilgrims visit this place to be baptised.

Tiberias has natural beauty and the presence of three therapeutic springs have made this place a favourite health and holiday resort. The shores of the lake provided a serene setting for Christ's teachings. The Gospels recount many episodes as having occurred here, including the meeting of James, John and Simon, the miraculous draught of fish, the multiplication of the loaves and the walking on the waters. Capernaum was the centre of Christ's ministry and a sanctuary has been built on the Mount of the Beatitudes.

At Nazareth there is the Basilica of the Annunciation where the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the Mother of Christ. Many churches

were built by the Byzantines, the Crusaders and finally the Franciscans, whose Sanctuary was pulled down in 1955 for the construction of the present Basilica which was completed in 1969.

Various tours were organised to other gardens in the area around Jerusalem. The Promenade (or *Tayclot* in Hebrew) affords one of the most spectacular views of Ancient and Modern Jerusalem and the temple *Dome of the Rock*. The Rose Garden near the Knesset contains a rich variety of Rose species from all over the world, in 15 acres. The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East - the Cathedral of St George the Martyr 1910 - has a lovely garden. It is the Peace Garden, dedicated to the realization of peace and justice in the Holy Land.

Friday night is the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath. Members of the group are invited, under the aegis of the Jerusalem Friends of the Botanical Gardens, to share a meal with host families. There was also afternoon tea on visits to other homes and gardens. One met people who have worked in the gardens for over 40 years and many ladies who have given time to an association, established in 1978, which acts as a go-between for the garden and community of Jerusalem.

Believe it or not there is also time to sight-see on one's own. One can visit the Citadel of David Museum - spanning the history of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea Scrolls - shrine of the books.

In the late afternoon, take tea - really delightful; the cakes are delicious! There are lots of lovely restaurants for a good evening meal. The natives love their food, and it's all great fun!

For more information, contact the Friends of Israel Educational Trust - Director: John D.A. Levy (phone 0171 435 6803).

Meeting in early December with snow and ice on the ground, the PCC members turned their attention to thoughts of summer! Specifically, the Petertide Fair on 29th June. It was decided that the proceeds should be dedicated to supporting two overseas causes with local links; details will be forthcoming in the new year.

The churchwardens reported on their continuing work with Bishop Robin to identify a new Rector: the vacancy had recently been advertised in the *Church Times* and it was hoped to hold interviews in January.

Finally, gratitude was expressed to John Cook, through whose generosity the pulpit in St Peter's has been revarnished and partially gilded. Anyone who has not inspected the result is recommended to do so (*see picture below*).

Georgina Tregoning



review letters

Stuart Kibble writes on 19th November:

Thank you all very much indeed for making this my Confirmation day very special.

I would also like to say to everyone who has helped me at St Peter's and All Saints' churches that I will treasure these moments for a very long time.

39 Riverside Gardens
Berkhamsted, HP4 1DN

James Pitkin writes:

It doesn't happen very often but I decided to add to the correspondence about Tompkins the Butchers, having come across the name in my researching of my family name. I have enclosed a copy of the relevant page from *Pigot's Directory* of 1839 showing four butchers called Tompkins (one of whom was also a grocer) and also a boot/shoe maker.

Emily Tompkins at 140 High Street was the widow of Thomas (according to the 1881 census). However, I suspect that correspondence on Tompkins the Butchers will have closed! The Review also spoke of "Soldiers' Bottom" - I enclose the reference to it from Percy Birtchnell's book.

3 Cranwell Avenue
Carterton
Oxfordshire
OX18 3SB

Editor's Note: *Far from being closed, the subject of Tompkins Butchers gets a further airing in John Cook's About the Town on page 9. Space doesn't allow us to include the full extracts James Pitkin kindly sent - anyone interested is invited to contact one of the editorial team.*

Come on, have a go!

By now you'll have seen some of the changes we've made to *Review* this month. We hope you like the result (comments of course, both good and critical, are welcomed by the editorial team). To thrive, we depend on news, articles, pictures and letters - and they come from *you!* So, are you a latent journalist or photographer? Perhaps not so latent? Then please let us have your contribution. Our coverage is wide: secular and church subjects, serious and lighthearted. We're particularly keen to include series of articles over several issues. And new ideas are always welcome!

We can handle contributions in many formats: paper (typed, double spaced if possible but handwritten not refused) and word processor disks (Word, WordPerfect, ASCII text formats). Photographs can be colour or black & white, and we can handle drawings on paper or in electronic format (CorelDRAW! V3, bmp, pcx, tif, cgm formats for the technical).

A Grand Old Canal

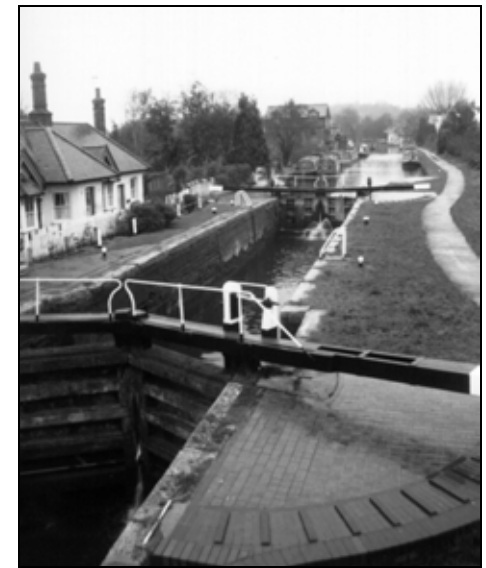
Stephen Halliday looks at the history of one of Berkhamsted's best known features.

IN SEPTEMBER I saw that our local Adult Education Centre, a branch of West Herts College, was advertising evening classes on the History of the Grand Union Canal. I have long felt that I ought to know more about this distinctive feature of Berkhamsted so I decided to sign on. I am very glad that I did.

The tutor is Ken Moore, a retired civil engineer who lives in Rickmansworth and who is a canal enthusiast with a knowledge of our local waterway which seems to me encyclopaedic as well as an amazing collection of mementos and videos, some dating from the 1950s. He seems to know the date of every bridge, lock and arm of the canal and manages to make it all sound interesting.

The Act of Parliament authorising the construction of the *Grand Junction* canal was passed in 1793 and work began the same year. The purpose of the enterprise was to provide a shorter and faster link between the Midlands and London than was available from the then existing route via Oxford. The Grand Junction connected the River Thames, at Brentford, with Braunston, on the Oxford canal which linked Coventry with Oxford and London. Braunston, which is otherwise unknown to history, is near Daventry and also near *Watford Gap*, the once infamous service station on the M1 motorway. All distances on the canal are measured from Braunston.

The canal was designed by William Jessop, one of the most famous canal engineers, and its estimated cost was four hundred thousand pounds. It eventually cost about one million pounds and was



The lock beside Station Road, with Bridgewater Boats in the background.

thus two and a half times its original estimate. Curiously, the Great Western Railway, London's main drainage and the Channel Tunnel also cost two and a half times their original estimates. Perhaps there is some undiscovered law of engineering or accountancy that grand, pioneering projects cost two and a half times their estimate. There's a subject for someone's Ph.D.

The canal is ninety-three miles long and has one hundred and two locks. The 'summit' of the canal is the three mile stretch between Cow Roast and Bulbourne, where it passes through the Chilterns at three hundred and ninety-one feet above sea level. This stretch is known as 'Tring Jungle' because of the thick curtain of trees on either bank and the abundance of wildlife. I often cycle along the towpath in summer and never fail to see herons along there as well as a multitude of smaller birds, including kingfishers. There are two long tunnels, one near Braunston itself and the longest one at Blisworth which is over three thousand yards long. Upon reaching these tunnels the horses would be unharnessed and led over the top. In their place the boatmen would engage the services of

'leggers' who would lie sideways on the boats and 'leg' then through the tunnel by 'walking' their feet along the sides of the tunnel. They must have been very fit and were well paid for this arduous work.

The canal reached Berkhamsted in September 1798 but was not opened for its full length until February 1805 owing to the difficulty in completing the Blisworth tunnel. Two contractors failed to complete this difficult and hazardous task and eventually the Grand Junction company completed the work itself. Apparently Pickfords was one of the earliest users of the canal. Until the coming of the railways in the 1840s the canal enjoyed a virtually monopoly in the carriage of goods but thereafter traffic slowly declined. The stretch from London to Berkhamsted remained heavily used until well into the 1960s because of the timber merchants in Berkhamsted, the soft drinks

factory in Two Waters (where B&Q now stands), the paper mills in Apsley and the Oualtine factory in Kings Langley, all of which were deliberately situated on the canal in its early days.

It became the "Grand Union" canal in the late nineteenth century as a result of mergers with other canal companies which went on to Birmingham, Nottingham and Leicester. It is now used almost exclusively for pleasurecraft, prominent among which is our own town's *Bridgewater Boats*. A fascinating museum at Stoke Bruerne (near Towcester) relates the history of the canal and, nearer home, the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust has a small exhibition centre at Batchworth, near Rickmansworth, which is open on Sunday afternoons.

The course has been so successful that the Berkhamsted Centre is hoping to run a sequel after Christmas. I recommend it.

Ian McCalla's anger is roused by the

Maintenance of Allotments

I don't often get roused to anger (well, not very often), but I was by a recent report in



the Herald-Express. It appears that the Berkhamsted Town Council have rejected a bid from Sunnyside Rural Training for maintenance of the allotments, because the Council claims that Sunnyside's accounts were not in order, thus implying that they are a "dodgy outfit".

Sunnyside Rural Training is a grant-aided organisation which provides activity for disadvantaged people who would otherwise be unemployed. The public bodies providing the grants are clearly happy with them, as is Dacorum Borough

Council, which employs them for footpath and bridleway maintenance. All those nice new stiles and paths going up to Berkhamsted and Northchurch Commons were built by Sunnyside. Northchurch Parish Council uses their services pretty extensively, without any problems. They clear rubbish, plant trees and the whole length of Bridleway 51 (mentioned in my last month's article) was cleared by them. Without the low cost service that they provide, that bridleway would still be blocked and unusable. They have also cleared many other footpaths and bridleways in the area. Perhaps if Berkhamsted were to become involved with footpath and bridleway maintenance (as have Aldbury and Northchurch), it would know more about Sunnyside Rural Training. And some of the stiles would be in better condition, too.



**The Rev John
Tabor, Rector of
St Mary's, reflects
on the year ahead.**

reviewnorthchurch

'I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God; that shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way".' (M. L. Haskins)

Those words, made famous by George VI in his Christmas message to the nation, fell out of fashion for many years, but recently people have rediscovered this quotation, and its meaning has been appreciated by another generation.

The picture that is presented in some ways recalls the well known words of Jesus - *"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."* It is not just on the threshold of a new year that we require reassurance and need to grasp again the promise of a friend to guide us; every day we face situations that test us and try us, leaving us bewildered and bereft.

There are no two ways about it: it is a very daunting thing to be a human being. We are born completely helpless into a world which is often harsh and cruel; we are born to die in one way or another, either before or after our allotted span has elapsed - a grim prospect, indeed, if between birth and death for most of us there were not to be times of unutterable joy, of beauty, of fun, of growing awareness and maturity. Whatever the present circumstances of our life may be, we should never forget that we have in the core of our being the image and likeness of God, and are intended to be children of light, created for eternal life with God in heaven.

Over the last few months there have been many terrible examples in affairs both at home and abroad, which show that the light in the souls of men can be extinguished, and their hopes destroyed. And yet, as we affirm each Christmas, the light of Christ shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

In all our lives there are times of blackness, of loneliness, of mourning, when our hearts seem to be 'breaking under sorrow's iron rod'. There are times when our courage fails us, not always in times of crisis, but on a day to day level, when the 'last straw' really has 'broken the camel's back'. There are times, too, when a new challenge opens before us, and we tremble on the brink, quite unable to take another step unsupported.

The first way out of this spiritual and emotional impasse is to ask for help - 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. So often help isn't forthcoming simply because we fail to ask for it. 'We can cope'; 'nobody's interested anyway'; 'don't let's make a fuss'. What a barren and loveless life we lead, if we allow sentiments such as these to take over our lives! On a personal level we may be let down by some people, but that should not stop us trying again. If we don't ask for help, how can anyone in turn trust us to give it? If we ask it of 'the man who stands at the gate of the year', of Christ himself, we shall never fail to find his outstretched hand. He is the one who replies, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.'

The assurance of this promise, of this certainty, allows us to be bold, brave and determined, and to do things we never knew we were capable of. Staying within the safe paths of life, on the other hand, and never venturing forward, is to miss out

review notes¬ices

MID-WEEK COFFEE AT ALL SAINTS'

On the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 10am there will be coffee served at All Saints' for mums with small children or just any woman who fancies a chat. We also plan to hold a pram service on the fourth Tuesday at 10:30am.

BREAD AND CHEESE LUNCHES

On the last Tuesday of the month a *Bread and Cheese Lunch* is held in the Friends Meeting House, 289 High Street, to which everyone is invited. The modest proceeds help support Quaker social and peace concerns.

However, our lunch in February will be different. We are very much hoping that we shall be joined by our friends in other local churches on **Tuesday, 27th February** from 12.30 to 2pm when we shall be supporting **Christian Aid**. We shall be joined by Moussa Conteh from Christian Aid (many will remember him when he addressed us so well at the United Service in St Mary's Northchurch not so long ago). Soup, bread and cheese will cost £1.25, drinks and fruit are extra.

Please make a note of the date now, and come and support us!



You'll doubtless remember the first *Showtime at Shrovetide* we held last year. Well, the good news is that we're repeating the evening this year on Saturday, 17th February.

Like last year, we need performers for the evening. We'd like to keep the theme of 'homegrown' entertainment and need as many volunteers as possible to offer their talents. The first event was a huge success, not least due to the diversity of performances.

So, get thinking: whether you can offer a solo performance or as a group; song, dance or comedy; short or long (well, not *too* long!) we need to hear from you. And remember, Showtime at Shrovetide is an event for the whole parish - all congregations at both All Saints' and St Peter's. Don't be shy - we broke the ice last year, and this year will be even better! Get in touch with Angela Morris (866992), Chris Smalley (826821) or any St Peter's events committee member.

Northchurch Review (con't from p23)

on the experience of faith and trust, and the rewards they bring. Sticking to the 'tried and true', and being afraid of the darkness of uncertainty, can prevent us from finding the peace and the strength waiting for us the other side of the shadow.

This New Year let each one of us resolve to 'put your hand into the hand of God'. In so doing, we shall indeed find it 'better than a light and safer than a known way', for ourselves and for those whom we love. **A happy and prosperous New Year to you all.**

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TUESDAY CLUB

Our first meeting in 1996 is entitled *Beauty and the Beasts* when Mrs. P. Cunningham will talk about the wild life in Ashridge. What a terrific start! We all look forward to learning more about this beautiful woodland. That meeting is on 2nd January at 8pm in the Court House.

The following meeting will be at the same time and in the same place on 6th February. That will be our Birthday Celebration, when Mrs. June Douglas will present *A Feast for the Eye*. More details about our informal group may be obtained from Thelma Harris on 865785 or Rene Dunford on 862420.

W.E.A.

The Workers Educational Association will be presenting two courses beginning in January. **History of Industry** starts on Monday, 8th January from 8 - 9.30 pm in Berkhamsted Library in Kings Road. It lasts for 13 weeks and the course tutor is George Crutcher. Telephone 865445 for information.

Introduction to the History of Art starts on Wednesday, 24th January, from 10 - 11 am at the Friends Meeting House, 289 High Street. This course lasts for 10 weeks and the course tutor will be Judi Ritche. Please call 866605.

DONATE POUNDS TO OXFAM WITHOUT SPENDING A PENNY

"I had no idea there was so much to it" is a typical reaction from would-be volunteers on touring the Oxfam shop for the first time. Whether you are interested in operating the till, dressing the window, pricing the clothes, planning a fashion show, supporting craft producers overseas or discovering the right price for the latest collectable (did you know a phone card has sold for £29,000?), the Oxfam shop is the place to develop your interest. Hours are very flexible so call at the shop in the High Street for a *Join the Team* leaflet and donate pounds to a very worthy cause without spending a penny.

ST PETER'S WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We meet on Wednesday, 24th January at 2pm in the Court House when Neil Shacklock will be showing us slides and talking about *Riding the Trains in India*. This is an ideal programme for a cold January afternoon, so do come along. Visitors are always welcome. If you need transport please ring Vera Pullen (862196).

BERKHAMSTED CASTLE W.I.



Our President Mrs. Joan Griffiths welcomed members and guests to a special Christmas meeting when we were pleased to be entertained by the ladies from the *Ivinghoe Bell Ringers*. These ladies

gave us a delightful programme of well-known tunes and Christmas carols which were thoroughly enjoyed by all of us. During tea-time three members - Liz Baxendale, Florrie Hutton and Nina Frazer - amused us with humorous seasonal poems written by Liz. Laughter all round the tea-room! Our president was pleased to award Mrs. Marjorie Smith with a silver butter-knife for being our competition winner for the year.

Now we look forward to another year of enjoyment with the Institute in 1996. Why not come and join us?

Our next meeting will be on 5th January when the speaker is to be Miss Elizabeth Baxendale, speaking on *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways*, at the Court House at 2pm.

BERKHAMSTED W.I.

We meet every Wednesday evening in the month at 7:30pm in the Gable Hall, Prince Edward Street. Our January meeting is on the 16th when the talk is about *Waddesdon Manor and Centenary Restoration*. Do come along and find out what the Women's Institute can offer in the way of friendship, fun and learning - our future programme includes Chinese cooking, hidden messages in Fashion, plant surgery, a talk on The Drovers Road to Dorchester and many other subjects. You will be made very welcome.

reviewdiary

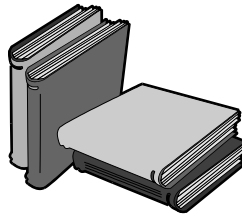
All services at normal times unless stated.

Jan / Feb 1996	JANUARY		
	7	9:30am	Epiphany High Mass (transferred from 6th January) <i>St Peter's Church</i>
	12		St Peter's Area Committee
	14		Family Service <i>All Saints'</i>
	19		Standing Committee
	FEBRUARY		
	4	10:30am	UNITED (with the Methodists) Service <i>All Saints'</i>
	4	11:15am	Choral Matins <i>St Peter's</i>
	9		PCC Meeting
	11		Family Service <i>All Saint's</i>
	16		Standing Committee

From the Registers...

Baptisms (St Peter's)

26 November	Chloe Rose Giles
3 December	Danielle Susan Maydom
10 December	Rebecca May Adcock
17 December	Harriet Mary Tamplin, Maximilian Ebrahim Thomas Khazaneh



Funerals

14 November	Ruby Ann Clark	Chilterns Crematorium
15 November	Bessie Gascoigne	St Peter's (Ashes interred at St Peter's)
21 November	John Collister	Chilterns Crematorium
24 November	Richard Reynolds (Len)	West Herts Crematorium



WAY INN - A Christian Centre at 268 High Street

Come through the **Post Office** to our **shop** which sells greetings cards, Christian books, stationery and many gifts. **Upstairs** you will find our **coffee shop** serving lunches, teas, snacks or just a cup of coffee.

SundaySchool

Sunday Schools at St Peter's and All Saints'

St Peter's

Sunday School starts at 9:30am and finishes at 10:30, in the Court House (next to St Peter's church in the High Street). We have two schools - Sunday School caters for the 4 to 10 year olds, with Pathfinders continuing upwards from 10 years. Each school is divided into several groups (three or four).

Everyone is extremely welcome. Mums and Dads - why not leave your children with us on a Sunday morning? You'll be warmly welcome at the 9:30 service in church, or you can just return for your offspring at 10:30.

Contact Christine Tucker on 873272 for more details.

All Saints'

All Saints' Sunday School is open for all children from the age of 3 to 9 years. Children from 10 years are welcome at our Pathfinders group. We begin at 9:15am each Sunday during term-time and finish at 10:15. Children join the main service in church part way through.

For more information contact Vivienne Bull on 870921.

All Saints' Creche

We operate a creche at the same times as Sunday School (above) for children under 3. There are toys to play with and at least two adults are there to supervise. Details from Julie Wakely (875504)



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Principal J.R. Adkins BSc (Hons) PGCE

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Contacts

The Revd Canon Basil Jones, 17 Lochnell Road. Tel: 864485
 The Revd Jim Lawrenson (Hon.Asst.Priest), Downside, 7 Torrington Road. Tel: 865999
 The Revd Preb Stephen Wells (Hon.Asst.Priest), 57 Meadow Road. Tel: 870981
 Miss Marjorie Bowden (Reader), 18 Greenway. Tel: 871283
 Mrs Joan Cook (Reader), The Gardeners Arms, Castle Street. Tel: 866278
 Tom Montague (Reader), 27 Hill View. Tel: 875320
 Mrs Jenny Wells (Reader), 57 Meadow Road. Tel: 870981
 Parish Secretary: Mrs Jean Green, 17 Cowper Road. Tel: 863241
 Churchwardens Christopher Green, 17 Cowper Road. Tel: 863241;
 John Banks, Ladybrand, Cross Oak Road. Tel: 871195

Parochial Church Council

Secretary: Alan Conway, 7 Kilfillan Gardens. Tel: 865798
 Treasurer: Michael Robinson, 36 Trevelyan Way. Tel: 863559

St Peter's

Director of Music: Vaughan Meakins. :01494 837412; Assistant: Mrs Jean Wild. 866859
 Organist: Mrs Jean Cooper. Tel: 874088

Sundays

8.00am	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
9.30am	Family Sung Eucharist with Creche & Sunday Schools (in the Court House) followed by coffee in the Court House.	Wednesday 6.45am Thursday 11.00am Friday 9.15am Holy Days - see weekly Notices
11.15am	Matins & Sermon (1st Sunday only)	1st Monday in the month at 7.30pm, Holy
6.00pm	Evensong & Sermon (except 1st Sunday see All Saints')	Communion & Service for Healing Matins & Evensong said daily

Confessions

After Saturday Evensong (5.00pm) or at other times by appointment.

Weddings, Banns of Marriage, Baptisms, Funerals

Please contact Revd Canon Basil Jones

Bellringers (St Peter's): Miss Priscilla Watt, 9 Kings Road. Tel: 863804

All Saints'

(shared with the Berkhamsted Methodist Church)
 Organist and choir: Mrs Valerie McCalla. Tel: 871765

Sundays

8.00am	Holy Communion (1st Sun - Methodist)
9.15am	Family Sung Eucharist & Sunday Schools, then coffee in the Hall
11.00am	(Methodist Morning Service)
6.30pm	Evening Service (1st Sunday - Anglican rite, other Sundays Methodist rite)

Weekdays

Holy Communion: Tuesday 9.30am
 Holy Days - see weekly Notices

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