

the magazine for town and parish

your **Berkhamsted**



When Neverland came to Berkhamsted
My Berkhamsted with actor Adrian Scarborough
Help dealing with debt
Celebrating 30 years of the Petertide Fair

January 2011

50p

From the Editor January 2011



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

Welcome to the first issue of *Your Berkhamsted* for 2011.

This month Dan Parry looks at how Berkhamsted's history is closely connected to one of the most famous children's stories of all time.

Elinor Mumford shares with us her experiences of being a Visitor for the Motor Neurone Disease Association, and we hear about a local initiative to help those who have found themselves struggling with debt.

We look forward to the thirtieth anniversary of the Petertide Fair this year, while Cathy Edmunds suggests some resolutions for 2011.

Angela Morris tells us about an interesting and creative competition for children, we bring you the fourth chapter of our serial *Little Spirit*, and actor Adrian Scarborough tells us about his Berkhamsted.

Ian Skillicorn, Editor

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We welcome contributions, suggestions for articles and news items, and readers' letters.

For all editorial and advertising contacts, and for copy dates, please refer to page 30.

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Your Berkhamsted Leader by Fr Luke Geoghegan



After the party comes the hangover. Or so they tell me. 2011 looks to be very tough for a lot of people.

The cuts in expenditure made by the Government have in very many cases not yet filtered through. But in 2011 they will.

Many people in the public sector will lose their jobs. It's difficult to see how an already slow economy will not get slower with fewer spenders in society. Many people on benefits will have less money and there are fewer jobs to go round. Many very talented and skilled people in the private sector have lost their jobs, including many in Berkhamsted. If the skilled and the articulate cannot find work what chance for many of today's unemployed youth.

Actually, this is not a tirade against the Coalition Government. The debts UK PLC are carrying are far too high. When debt is too big whole countries can be at risk of being declared bankrupt, as recent events in Greece and Ireland have shown.

So how did we get here? Well, I'm not an economist, but two things seem to have happened. One, we had to bail out the banks. There was too much risk taking, from people who were rewarded too much for taking risks. Two, the previous Government spent a lot of money on public services. Some of this to my mind was extremely necessary – it's good to see some new schools and hospitals around the country. But some of it was

undoubtedly wasteful.

But who borrowed the money from the banks? Er...we did. And who expected that the Government would spend ever more on public services? Er...we did. It's true that the banks created a climate of easy lending, but they didn't put a gun to our heads and *force* us to borrow. Similarly, in the last ten years when did you last see a news item, or a newspaper piece, arguing that we should make do with what we've got?

There are times when people need to borrow money. I have a mortgage. But there are differences between borrowing money as a first, middle and last resort. Too often for individuals, families, companies and countries we reach for the credit line.

Too often the Church seems to think the same way. Why are some Dioceses (not ours, thank heaven) in the Church of England regularly in the red by large amounts? The idea of fasting (from too much food, too much drink) is a common idea both in Church and society. Addiction theory teaches us that over-dosing: whether on drink, food or other addictive behaviours, masks inner problems that need to be dealt with. A few years ago at a church conference I argued for a debt fast. I felt both mute and invisible. I could speak and hear them, but they apparently couldn't hear me or see me.

After the party comes the hangover. Maybe it's nature's way of telling us something. *JB*

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Neverland comes to Berkhamsted

Dan Parry reveals how a young Berkhamsted resident was the inspiration for the famous boy who never grew up

Those making the traditional Christmas visit to a panto this season may find themselves being entertained by *Peter Pan*, the eternal tale of flying children, pirates and impossible lands. It's said by some that *Peter Pan* was first put on at the Duke of York's theatre, on the edge of Covent Garden, in December 1904.

However scenes from the world's most famous excursion into make-believe probably received their first airing at a beautiful house on a site today occupied by the Rex.



The Peter Pan statue in Kensington Gardens

The true story of Peter Pan is less about hook-handed pirate captains than about the obsessive relationship between a bewitching writer and his innocent muses.

J.M. Barrie was a Scot plagued by yearnings he could not fulfil, and despite early success as a writer he remained a child at heart. Barely five foot tall and surrounded by a world of fantasy characters, Barrie was married but has been described by many as asexual. This gentle image, caricatured by Johnny Depp's fey dreamer meandering through Hollywood's *Finding Neverland*, unsurprisingly falls short of the mark. There was something dangerous about Barrie; something obsessive – other-worldly even. D.H. Lawrence went so far

as to say: "J.M. Barrie has a fatal touch for those he loves. They die."

While walking in Kensington Gardens in 1897 Barrie met the young Llewelyn Davies brothers, three boys regularly taken to the park by their nanny. When he first met them George was just five, John a year younger and Peter was only a baby. Later the boys were to be joined by Michael (born in 1900) and Nicholas (1903), and together they came to exert a great influence on 'Uncle Jim', who in return carried them headlong them into adventures populated

by fairies, pirates and Indians. For Barrie, the fact that the boys were another man's children was neither here nor there. By 1904 their father, Arthur Llewelyn Davies, had chosen to take his family away from London to Berkhamsted, where they moved into Egerton House, a fine Elizabethan mansion. Nevertheless Barrie continued to visit the family, and the back-garden games continued.

The adventures included stories and characters drawn from Barrie's published works. Peter Pan first appeared in the 1902 novel for adults *The Little White Bird*, featuring a run-away baby boy who roams about Kensington Gardens by night. By November 1903 Barrie had begun working on a "fairy play" which

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The author JM Barrie

again featured Peter Pan, who was created – Barrie told the boys – "by rubbing the five of you violently together, as savages with two sticks produce flame." The revived incarnation of Peter Pan was at once impish and mischievous, brave and single-minded, and locked in an eternal childhood, much like his creator.

The play proved to be a critical and commercial success and Barrie was keen to share his wealth with the family who had so inspired him. When Arthur developed cancer in 1906, his financial situation suffered and it was Barrie who paid for Arthur's medical fees and also later the boys' school fees. After Arthur died at Egerton in 1907, his wife Sylvia took the boys back to Kensington. She herself also died of cancer in 1910, leaving instructions that Barrie was to be involved in caring for her sons. He however rewrote the will, giving himself a bigger role than had been intended and thus became the boys' guardian.

Arthur and Sylvia's deaths were to be followed by further tragedy. George was killed at Ypres. Michael drowned with a close male friend, and possible lover, while at Oxford in 1921. In the 1950s

Peter came to edit family letters, including those exchanged between Michael and Barrie of which there were more than 2,000, though he found the task did nothing to lighten the burden he'd lived with all his life. In being publicly portrayed as the 'real Peter Pan', he came to refer to the play as "that terrible masterpiece". While the fictional child at one point becomes detached from his shadow, in reality of course Llewelyn Davies could never do the same. Plagued by this, and other anxieties, Peter burned Michael's letters ("they were too much"), then in 1960 threw himself under a tube train.

Even Egerton did not survive, being demolished in 1936. Today, Peter Pan himself still zips around the world, flying in and out of children's imaginations as impishly as he ever did. Maybe he left some of his sparkle behind, while foraging among the undergrowth of that Berkhamsted garden, for though the house may have gone the spirit of fantasy still lives on. The Rex, completed on the site two years later, continues to wow audiences with tales of adventure, though its arrival didn't please everyone. In 1953, Peter wrote: "Oh dear oh dear, I passed through Berkhamstead the other day and it was almost more than I could bear to see that horrible cinema on the site of dear Egerton House, and the lovely garden turned into a loathsome concrete car park." Whether or not Lawrence was right, Barrie went far in truly understanding the ways of children. Without the boys, their games and their adventures in Berkhamsted and elsewhere, one of the world's best loved plays might not have sparkled so brightly. *yB*

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Adrian Scarborough

Actor Adrian Scarborough tells us about his Berkhamsted

The place in the local area that I like to visit to relax and reflect is...

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

When I want to indulge myself I go to...

...my plot on Sunnyside Allotments. It's mine...all mine! Growing my own fruit and veg has changed my life, and the community feeling up there is very special.

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

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

I moved to Berkhamsted because...

...it feels like it cares about itself.

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

...the seemingly endless, indiscriminate



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

I'm proud to live in Berkhamsted...

...because it takes pride in being a real community.

Berkhamsted is crying out for...

...a greengrocer.

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

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

My favourite place to get a coffee or a bite to eat in or around the town...

...is Fennel, the deli on Lower Kings Road, for a really good sandwich. Always mouth-watering. Try the mozzarella and pesto, it's heavenly, the sausage rolls are sublime. By far the best cheese selection in town. It's a gem.

The funniest thing to happen to me was...

...when I slid down the attic stairs and broke my toe, and my wife and children openly and continuously laughed at me. The agonising pain was lessened by their hilarity, even though I wanted to slowly kill them. Now, the memory of it never fails to make me smile. *yB*

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Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

Finances continue to get tighter and inflation continues to be high. Overspending at Christmas time will not be helping. The good news is that Christians Against Poverty is here to help people get their finances back on track. A successful FREE money management courses called CAP Money was held in November and another one is being organised for January 2011.

Attendees to the courses are offered teaching on good money management skills, budgeting tips and overall advice on how to curtail expenditure. The courses are run at The Way Inn, Berkhamsted in partnership with churches in Berkhamsted and open to everyone, whether Christian or not.

If you would like to join a course, or know someone who would benefit, then give me a ring on 07891 760244 or email capmoneyberkhamsted@yahoo.co.uk to confirm details.

For those who are unfortunate enough to already be in a crisis situation and need counselling there is a free debt counselling resource already available through a CAP Centre in Hemel Hempstead. This is run in partnership with New Horizons Christian Fellowship.

To book an initial appointment there all you have to do is call FREE on 0800 328 0006 and a local debt coach will visit you. A realistic budget is worked out at CAP HQ by prioritising essential bills and negotiating affordable payments with each creditor and stopping unfair interest and charges where possible.

For more information visit www.capmoney.org

Mike Wallis
Berkhamsted CAP Money

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Please email your letters to the Editor at editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk or post them to: Your Berkhamsted, Parish Office, The Courthouse, Berkhamsted, HP4 2AX

Volunteering as a Visitor

Elinor Mumford tells us about her voluntary work as a Visitor for the Motor Neurone Disease Association

When and why did you become an MND Visitor?

Having qualified as an Occupational Therapist (OT) in 1969, the last 17 years of my professional life I worked for Hertfordshire County Council in Adult Care Services and knew several clients who had Motor Neurone Disease. I realised how little it was understood and that there was a lack of knowledgeable support available to the families affected. I decided that after I retired I would train as a volunteer Visitor (AV) for the MND Association and was registered as an AV in 2008.

Did you have any training before you started?

Yes, the Association has an excellent and award-winning training programme. Taking three months to complete over two whole Saturdays and a residential weekend, it forces you to examine your personal experiences and attitudes to all sorts of issues relating to terminal illness.

Do you need any medical training to be a Visitor?

You do not have to have any medical training to be a Visitor but since I already have a medical and Adult Care Services background I find it useful.

What is expected of you as a Visitor? Could you tell us some of the typical things you do?

As Visitors we are expected to be proactive in keeping in touch with our people. We have to have time to devote to the role and must undergo additional



More information at www.mndassociation.org

training every year. I like to meet my people at least once, then keep in touch in whatever way they wish, visits, telephone or email, at least every month. I always give them my details and they can be in contact whenever they feel like it. Each situation depends on the needs and wishes of our people.

Do you remain a Visitor for the same person throughout the course of their disease?

Yes, this is something I learned as an OT and is even more important as an AV, that is to be consistent and remain supporting the person I have built up a relationship with to the end of their life, offering ongoing support to their bereaved families if they wish it.

Do you liaise with the healthcare professionals who are caring for the people you visit?

Every month I attend a multidisciplinary meeting chaired by a palliative care consultant, to exchange information on the people with MND that the team is in

contact with. Dieticians, Speech and Language Therapists, Physios, OTs, hospice staff, Macmillan Nurses, in fact any Health or Adult Care Services staff who have patients with MND and wish to discuss any difficulties are invited to the meeting. This has resulted in a faster referral rate to the appropriate professional, a more coordinated approach to their care and a lower rate of hospital deaths and admissions.

It must be a very emotional experience sometimes, do the MNDA offer you any support?

MND is so unpredictable and can be very distressing, even for us Visitors. Quite a few tears are shed, and that includes us! It is very important that we have support. We in the South Herts area support each other and are supported by our local Regional Care Development Advisor with the backup of National Office whose representatives we are. In fact it can be so distressing that the MNDA will not let anyone train as an AV if they have been bereaved themselves within the last 18-24 months.

How big is your catchment area?

As the only AV living West of the M1 I suppose you could say the West of the county is my catchment area, but I have visited people in Watford. If I was the only AV available to take on a new patient

I would travel anywhere in the South Herts area.

What are the biggest challenges of being a Visitor?

The biggest challenge as an AV is discussing the future with my people and their families and supporting them in whatever decisions they make. For example, if it is their decision to refuse a particular medical procedure when they can no longer swallow, I have to support them even if I think their decision is not correct. The condition will control them in the end, but there are conscious decisions that can be made so that the person with MND is still in charge of their care.

And the biggest rewards?

The biggest rewards come when someone says "Thank you for being there for us", or "You helped me to think straight".

What sort of person becomes an MNDA Visitor? What sort of personality do you need to have?

Many AVs have a medical background and are already familiar with MND. Others have had friends or family who have died with the disease, and others want to do a volunteering job without any prior knowledge of MND. Personality requirements are difficult to define but you have to be a good listener and have the ability to read between the lines of what is being said. By doing this we may be able to identify the beginnings of a problem which could be alleviated.

How can readers help or get involved?

By contacting the MNDA and becoming a volunteer in one of the many roles available. Phone MNDCoconnect 08457 626262, or follow the links on the MNDA website.

Some facts about MND

MND is a rare fatal neurological disease that can affect any adult at any time;
Half of those diagnosed die within 14 months, average life expectancy 2-5 years;
373 volunteer AVs throughout the country, 8 in Hertfordshire;
60 new cases are expected to be diagnosed in Hertfordshire each year.

Little Spirit

‘...everyone’s mission to others begins at home with the self.’

Chapter Four: The Lost Sun by **PJ Marvell**

‘I do believe,’ said the Curate, as he hung his robes in the vestry cupboard, ‘that we have a ghost living with us in the church!’

‘The Holy Ghost?’ said the Vicar with a highly raised eyebrow.

‘No, Yes, No!’ spluttered the Curate. ‘A ghost, ghost – very strange things are happening. I keep having to fill the water in the font, the old curtains seem to move around by themselves, yesterday I found them in a heap up in the balcony, and last night I swear I saw a light flickering in the tower window.’

As the Curate walked out of the vestry he hesitated by the door to the tower. He stared at the door handle and tried it - locked. Good. But he didn’t dare mention that his key was nowhere to be found.

‘Thump!’

‘THERE!’ yelled the Curate jumping round, ‘Did you hear that?’

‘Hear what?’ said the Vicar locking the vestry door and scurrying past.

‘The thumping!’

‘Didn’t hear a thing,’ said the Vicar waiting impatiently by the back door. ‘Gloves on, the snow’s thick outside, and hurry, we’ll be late to meet the churchwardens. There’ll be plenty of time for ghost hunting later,’ he muttered, smiling to himself.

As the Curate sped after the Vicar, right underneath their feet, the boy called Little Spirit stood up in the darkness. At precisely the moment the Curate had turned the handle to the tower, the boy had been standing on the other side, just about to unlock it. The shock of seeing the door handle turn of its own volition had made him jump so hard against the tower wall, to his surprise, he had dislodged a stone and fallen right through it!

The young boy dug around in the pockets of his oversized coat and pulled out a candle – he always carried one - hiding in the tower was very dark on winter days. He had spent most of his time there since Christmas because on the occasion he had got out of the church, the strange man with the pointed shoes nearly caught him. Little Spirit would never do as he wanted and give him the key to the tower.

The candle lit, the boy held it up and moved around in a circle. He found he had fallen into a rectangular chamber lined on each side with a row of stone tombs. The boy shivered, and wrinkled his nose, there was a musty smell and the floors were thick with dust, no-one had entered the crypt for centuries. He thought of the way he had seen the strange man touch the wall just inside the tower door, maybe he was trying to get inside? But why? At the far end of the chamber Little Spirit saw a huge wooden door. What was behind it? A tunnel out of the church? – his food supplies were running low.

(continues on page 19)

January Parish Diary

Sun 2nd	-	Shared Meal, following the Covenant Service, <i>All Saints</i>
Mon 3rd	<i>tbc</i>	January Church Walk, <i>All Saints</i>
Sun 16th	7:00pm	Launch of 30th Petertide Fair, <i>Court House, by invitation only</i>
Mon 17th	8:00pm	All Saints Council, <i>All Saints</i>
Fri 21st	eve	Quiz Night with fish and chips, <i>All Saints</i>
Mon 24th	7:30pm	Cowper Society Winter Talk: Clive Francis, <i>Court House</i>

Mothers' Union in Baghdad by Margaret Burbidge

Imagine life in Baghdad, as a woman and a Christian. Imagine living with stories like these. One woman had gone to the market and the woman next to her was killed. Another person witnessed a car



Mothers' Union, St George's Anglican Church, Baghdad (image from Facebook)

being blown up, but escaped unscathed. For women living in the most dangerous parish in the world, being a member of the Mothers' Union brings support and fellowship.

A Mothers' Union branch was opened in Baghdad in 2006, in St George's Anglican Church and has over 400 members and more than a thousand more who are involved. They faithfully attend meetings, despite the dangers of travelling to the church, and form small groups to undertake social outreach projects with the local orphanage, a home for disabled



children, and bereaved children and women. Families forced out of their homes for being Christian are also helped. The women themselves raise money for their work and this is supplemented by grants made from the Central Overseas and Relief Funds supported by members in the UK.

Through the war, bombs and bullets threatened the Christian community in the city. Violence targeted at Christian districts in recent weeks, killing more than 50 people in the Syrian Catholic Church, has been described by the Archbishop of Canterbury as "sacriligious butchery". Canon Andrew White, the Vicar of St George's, acknowledges it can be hard to keep faith alive in this situation, but though being victims of the atrocities themselves, Mothers' Union members continue to share their stories and help others. Promoting stable family life is not easy in Baghdad, but by putting their faith into action and reaching out to others, Mothers' Union members are keeping hope alive.

For more information on Mothers' Union, go to: www.themothersunion.org

Rectory Lane Cemetery by Christopher Green

In a survey of public open space undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council in 2007, Berkhamsted was recorded as being deficient in leisure space, especially parks and gardens. This finding inspired a new interest in the burial ground

popularly known as Three Close Lane or Rectory Lane Cemetery, an area of about 1.25 hectares of somewhat unkempt open space just off the High Street towards the east end of the town. Now, three years on, following discussions involving St Peter's Parochial Church Council and both the Town and Borough Councils, a group has been formed – *The Friends of Rectory Lane Cemetery* – with the object of improving and maintaining this area as an attractive public amenity. This group is still at an early stage of development, exploring the potential of the site, identifying funding sources and seeking the support of the wider community. A small scale survey of public opinion last



Rectory Lane Cemetery showing the Cooper monument in 1968 (Photo: Jo Wimbush)

year suggests that most people would like to see well kept areas of mown grass with scattered trees and shrubs, together with areas managed for wildlife conservation and with marked trails guiding visitors to features of local history and wildlife interest. A start is being made. In

recent weeks the Friends group has had the much appreciated help of the Hemel Hempstead Conservation Volunteers to clear scrub and unwanted saplings from some of the more overgrown parts of the cemetery.



Work of clearance in progress during a recent visit of the Hemel Hempstead Conservation Volunteers to the Rectory Lane Cemetery (Photo Friends of Rectory Cemetery)



The overgrown Cooper monument in 2009 (Photo Friends of Rectory Lane Cemetery)

But much clearance work remains to be done and in the spring the Friends will be looking for volunteers to help with this ongoing task. The Friends are also looking for people with fund-raising skills, with active interests in wildlife management or with experience in landscape design. If you are interested and would like to become a Friend, please contact **Christopher Green** on 863241 or by emailing greenc@waitrose.com

Regular Church Activities

- 3rd Mon Pastoral Network, 7:45pm, The Court House. Contact Philippa Seldon 871534
- Tue Chuckles Parent & Toddler Group, 10-11:30am. All Saints Church Hall. Song Time or short service as announced. Contact Jenny Wells, 870981
- Tue St Peter's Choir, Children 5:15-6:15pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859
- 1st Tue Tuesday Club, 7:45pm A lively women's group with guest speaker. The Court House. Contact Barbara McKenna 871159
- 3rd Tue Mothers' Union, meet in members' houses at 8pm. 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
- Wed Pathfinders Club, not Spring Term for further information contact Parish Office
- Thu Home Group, 8pm on 2nd and 4th Thurs.
- Thu Bellringing, 8pm, St Peters. Contact Helen Ruberry, 890949
- Fri Little Fishes Parent & Toddler Group 9:30-11:30am. The Court House. Weekly, with short service on 1st Friday in St Peter's (10am). Tracy Robinson 863559
- Fri St Peter's Choir, Children 7-8:30pm, Adults 7:30—8:30pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859
- 3rd Sat ABC Prayer Breakfast, 8am for breakfast & prayers. Various local churches.

News from the Pews ... a light-hearted view by Julian Dawson

As I sheltered in the lee of an upturned pew, protecting myself from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune flung at me by the protectors of sturdy wooden furniture, I reflected on whence had come this piece of unyielding oak which ironically was now my protector from the boiling vitriol of the Oak Pew Preservation Society. And a cursory browse on the interweb informs me that we have the Protestant Reformation to

thank for the serried ranks of seating. Did Luther have this in mind as a supplement to the diet of Worms? Discuss. Apparently, in some churches pews were originally installed at the expense of the congregation. Some privately owned pews were in fact locked. I am thankful for small mercies.



Registers

Baptisms

28 November Emma Louise Souto (St Peter’s)
28 November Sofia Elizabeth Souto (St Peter’s)
28 November Alfie Isaac Bowyer (St Peter’s)
28 November Finn William Joseph Tarpey (St Peter’s)

Weddings (none)

Funerals

12 November – Brenda Dann (St Peter’s)
19 November – Roger Brennen (St Peter’s)

15 October—Roma Haddock, Chiltern Crematorium
30 October—Roma Haddock, internment of ashes, Potten End

Sunday Services	St Peter’s	All Saints—January		
	8:00am Eucharist	2nd	10:00am	Covenant Service, Holy Communion
	9:30am Sung Eucharist & Sunday School	9th	10:00am	Morning Worship
	6:00pm Evensong	16th	8:00am	Holy Communion
	<i>First Sunday in month Family Service at 9:30am</i>		10:00am	Morning Worship with Holy Baptism
		23rd	10:00am	Morning Worship
		30th	10:00am	Holy Communion
			4:00pm	Healing Service

Key Church Contacts

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

Further information available from our church websites:

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

(continued from page 14)

The boy ran to the door, shoved it hard and squeezed through a narrow opening, into a low tunnel. Swinging the candle carefully ahead, a shaft of sunlight shimmered through the dark. Little Spirit walked across and found a statue moulded in the shape of a golden sun, mounted on a stand. He blew off the dust and touched the glittering rubies and emeralds which were set into the sun. It looked very valuable – it must be what the strange man wanted!

Finding it hard to breathe, he carefully replaced the statue and steadied himself. He had to see where the tunnel went and despite the thin air, he set off into the darkness. Panting hard, he grinned with relief as he reached a rough stone wall, and climbed the stone steps which had been carved in a zigzag pattern upwards across the wall. At the top he felt the stone slab above his head. He pushed up hard against the slab, but it wouldn't budge. So desperate was he to get out of the dark, airless tunnel that he heaved the slab with all the power his thin arms possessed – the slab moved and he burst into the sunlight among the frosty blades of grass.

'Where did you come from?' said an indignant voice.

Little Spirit froze and looked directly at a pair of red wellington boots and a mass of brown curls.

'You came out of the earth! You're not actually supposed to be alive! I'm Eliza Jones,' said the girl giving the boy a poke. 'Yes, I do suspect you are definitely alive!'

Little Spirit looked around, he was in a snow covered graveyard.

'Now, you should know, that I know, just about everything,' said Eliza, 'except your name! What is it?'

'Pequeño Espíritu,' whispered the boy. The first words of Spanish he had spoken since he had run away from home.

'Hello, Little Spirit,' said Eliza, 'Told you I know everything - my mother is Spanish. But I prefer to speak English, if you don't mind.'

Little Spirit nodded, he felt it was best to agree with Eliza and that he wasn't going to escape her very easily.

'What's down there?' said Eliza peering into the darkness. 'Don't do that,' she ordered, as Little Spirit tried to move the slab back over the hole. 'I want to go down.'

'ELIZA!'

'Drat! My mother,' said Eliza.

'Who are you talking to?' asked a woman, striding across the graveyard.

'A boy,' Eliza replied.

'Where?'

Eliza swivelled round. Little Spirit had disappeared. She looked down trying to find the stone slab, but the frosted grass looked as rough and overgrown as ever.

Under Eliza's red wellingtons Little Spirit waited patiently as the silence returned and he could no longer hear Eliza protesting that she really, really had seen a small boy called Little Spirit appear out of the ground, just like a ghost! *yB*

To be continued next month



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Snack Attack!

Angela Morris encourages children to get involved in a new competition

Take the SNACK ATTACK challenge



Snack Attack is a competition to design a Fairtrade snack and a marketing campaign. A group agrees on a new idea for a Fairtrade snack, invents a name for it, designs the packaging, and ideas to promote it.

The competition is open to groups of three or more who enter through their school or another organisation, Scouts, Guides or Pathfinders for instance.

There are three categories, years 3-6, 7-9, and 10-13.

With links to Business and Enterprise, DT, IT, English and more, Snack Attack was enthusiastically embraced by teachers and pupils alike when the competition was introduced to schools last year. It also

helps to fulfil criteria for Awards such as Fairtrade School, Eco-School or International School.

A new competition for the under 7s, has children working in groups of 3 or more to create a poster that answers the question, “How does Fairtrade have an impact on children in the developing world?”

There are cash prizes for the winning schools and groups, goody bags and more. The deadline is 8th April 2011. Good luck then, let us hope “Berkhamsted” is mentioned amongst the winners.

More at: www.traidcraftschools.co.uk/news_and_events/snack_attack_competition/

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New Year's resolutions

Cathy Edmunds suggests some resolutions for 2011

1. Make a fresh start

Make a fresh start to the year by clearing out your wardrobe of all those old clothes and accessories you never wear any more. Donate them to one of the town's charity shops.

2. Everybody needs good neighbours...

Do a favour for a neighbour. If you don't know your neighbour, go and introduce yourself!

3. Say it with a smile

Make a promise to yourself to smile at one stranger every day in Berkhamsted. You never know, they may just smile back!

4. Plant a tree

Help the environment and plant a tree. There's information on how to do it at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

5. Be positive

Say "yes" more often than you say "no" this year.

6. Adopt a charity

Adopt a specific charity for the year. There are loads of ways you can support them, through volunteering, donations and sponsorship. The options for which charity to choose are endless - there are many international, national and local charities that would love your support. Get some ideas by visiting www.charitychoice.co.uk

7. Give some time

Find half an hour each week to go and visit one of the 40,000 elderly people living in care homes in Britain that never



get any visitors. For information on helping the elderly go to www.ageuk.org.uk

8. Be organised

Buy next year's Christmas cards in the January sale.

9. Get in touch

Contact someone you've lost touch with and have wondered how they are.

10. Keep learning

Make an effort to find out something you never knew! There is information on the latest WEA classes and talks on our Community Pages, or visit the U3A website at www.u3a.org.uk

11. Expand your vocabulary

Learn a new word and then use it. Visit <http://wordsmith.org/awad>

12. Remember past times at playtime

Get out an old board game or jigsaw, dust it off and spend an hour or so playing it. Remember what fun can be had without the television or computer on! *yB*



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Petertide Fair

We look forward to the thirtieth anniversary of the Petertide Fair

2011 sees St Peter's marking the 30th anniversary of the first Petertide Fair (first held in 1981). In celebration, there is a packed season of events planned which are all raising money for charity. Traditionally the Fair has raised money for two charities as part of St Peter's annual outreach programme and these are usually one local charity and one overseas. This year, money raised at the Fair will be supporting the Berkhamsted based Sunnyside Rural Trust which helps adults with learning disabilities learn valuable life and employable skills such as horticultural training through the maintenance of allotments and selling the produce locally, developing IT and cookery skills and community based work. The money from Petertide events will be put towards a new people carrier which will enable the charity to transport its members around the local area.

The overseas charity is the McCabe Educational Trust which runs child-based educational projects throughout the Holy land, Nepal and India to relieve poverty,

sickness and distress. The Christian charity was set up 20 years ago and in 2008 sent more than £150k to projects in its chosen countries such as support for the Anand Niwas Boys' Home in India which helps with the education and pastoral care of over 200 pupils.

Judith Limbert,
Petertide Fair
Chairman, is

hoping to beat last year's total of £14,000 which was raised for charity: "Over 30 years the parishioners at St Peter's have been extremely generous both with their time and money at the Petertide Fair and we are hopeful that the 30th year can be our best year yet."

This year's Fair is being held on Saturday 11th June and will once again be providing a packed day of entertainment for Berkhamsted's residents. Highlights already confirmed include a steam train which will give rides in the churchyard, Punch & Judy and Alpacas, and there will be the usual popular line up of music, refreshments and stalls.

Before June, there are two events which are a must for any Berkhamsted resident's diary! (*continues on page 27*)



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Last year's Petertide Fair was a great success enjoyed by all

Friday 25 March 2011: Promises Auction

Back in 1981, the church ran a Promises Auction and is repeating this on Friday 25th March 2011 as part of the thirty year celebrations. Parishioners are being encouraged to offer their time, possessions or talents to auction at the event. St Peter's is on the lookout for superb chefs who can offer to cook a dinner party, artists who can paint a picture or residents who can offer a lift to the airport or an unusual experience which can all be auctioned to raise money for the Petertide causes. On the evening itself, local people are being invited to bid on their favourite lots over a glass of wine and refreshments. Ticket details will be released in due course.

Tuesday 3 May 2011: Petertide May Dinner

Last year the first ever Petertide May dinner saw over 100 people enjoy a delicious three course meal at The Gatsby in Berkhamsted, whilst being serenaded by St Peter's organist, Jon Lee, on the piano, with some rather forgettable singing from the Assistant Curate, Father John Pritchard! The evening was such a success that the dinner is being repeated this year on Tuesday 3rd May 2011 at 8pm. Please do consider putting a table together and attending this convivial event. Tickets will cost £35 each and will be on sale from 27th March.

For further details on all the events, please contact Chairman, Judith Limbert on 01442 873626 or email

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Bargains at Oxfam

The Oxfam shop in Berkhamsted will not be increasing the prices of its range of new products when VAT goes up in January. Instead it will be offering excellent bargains in its end of season sale which will continue while stocks last. It is a splendid opportunity to stock up with gifts at reasonable prices at a time when costs generally will be rising. There will also be some attractive Festive Food lines to tempt customers looking for reasonably priced presents.

Berkhamsted Youth Theatre

Berkhamsted Youth Theatre are proud to present "The Adventures of Mr. Toad." Thursday 14th April to Sat 16th April 2011 at 7.30pm and Sat matinee at

2.30pm at The Court Theatre, Pendley

A musical in two acts based on "The Wind in The Willows" by Kenneth Grahame.

Come and experience a collection of adventures that combine to tell the musical story of a group of everyday English animals who live along the banks of the river. Almost immediately the characters of Toad, Ratty, Mole, and Badger become as "real" as our next door neighbour, and we forget that they are "just" animals. The personalities of the characters are familiar to all of us: the silly, impulsive Toad; the practical Ratty; the emotional Mole; and the stodgy Badger. So come and immerse yourself and join Berkhamsted Youth Theatre, as they bring this charming story to life through drama, dance and musical adventures.

Ticket prices between £8 and £12 available from Berkhamsted Imaging Centre 226 High Street, Berkhamsted 01442 873069. Concessionary rates available.

The Cowper Society

The Cowper Society presents Three Winter Talks.

Monday 7th February 8pm in St Peter's: David Gauke MP for Hertfordshire South-West, speaking on life in Parliament.

Monday 28th February 8pm in the Court House: Ian Bartholomew, speaking about his experiences in the Arctic.

Monday 14th March 8pm in the Court

House: Roger Moorhouse, author of the acclaimed recent history - *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler's Capital*.

Free Entry. Retiring Collection. There will be wine beforehand.

Berkhamsted Branch WEA

Saturday Schools 10 – 4pm (bring your lunch with you. Coffee/tea served)

5th February
Life on Mars - Neale Monks

5th March
Ways of Knowing - Caroline Ellwood

14th May
Twentieth Century
English Music* - Jonathan Darnborough

18th June
Local Churches - Madeline Edmead

Price: £25 each or two for £45

Fridays - lunchtime talks with discussion, 12—2.30pm (bring your lunch with you. Coffee/tea served).
Sessions run 12 noon to 1pm; lunch; 1.30 – 2.30pm

28th January
The Poetry of Milton - David Pearce

25th February
Alchemy and Science - Neale Monks

18th March
James Bond and the
Bletchley Park Connection - Sue Curran

Price: £10.00 each; 3 for £27.

All at the Friends Meeting House, 289 High Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 1AJ
* (venue yet to be confirmed)

For more information contact Mary Fountain on 01442 823168 or visit the local branch website at www.weaberksamsted.co.uk

All Saints Church

There will be a service of wholeness and healing at All Saints Church Shrublands Road on Sunday 30th January 2011 at 4 pm.

Berkhamsted Film Society

Films are shown at the Civic Centre on Berkhamsted High Street. Screenings start at 8pm.

Mon 10th/Tues 11th January
Invictus

Mon 31st January/Tues 1st February
Anything for Her

For more information about the Society and the film programme for the rest of this season go to:
www.berksamstedfilmsociety.co.uk

We welcome your news of community events for these pages. The copy date for February's issue is January 7th. Listings may be edited for reasons of space.

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Our thanks

Again in 2010, Mr Francis Stanley (florist on the high street outside Laura Ashley) donated a Christmas Tree to the Parish Church for the Festive Season.

We remain so very grateful for this contribution and hope that he has a successful 2011.

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Editorial Team

Ian Skillicorn	862628, editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk
Fiona Powell	872338, fiona@yourberkhamsted.org.uk
Cathy Edmunds	07900 490169, cathy@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Advertising: Rowena Pike advertising@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Circulation: Sheila Miller 31 Lincoln Court, HP4 3EN (864277)

Treasurer: Michael Below Hillcote, Doctors Common Road,
HP4 3DR (862316) treasurer@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Copy Dates: 7 January 4 February 4 March

Seeing Beauty by Fr John Pritchard

In Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* her morality of the good reflects something of our human ability to be able to rejoice in beauty. She suggests that to delight in nature isn't just a "moral holiday" which we are kindly allowed, but an excellent way into "moral change". So it is good to be engaged with, and contextualise the "moral system" we apply to our lives.

The "self-forgetting" pleasure of living amongst the dramatic hoarfrosts of the past couple of weeks or the delight in a sunset whatever the time of year, can seemingly "clear our minds of selfish care". As Murdoch suggests, beauty is not a rival to moral goodness, but a means towards the 'unselfishing' which is a necessary condition for moral goodness.

Put simply "beauty" and how we respond to such "a thing" makes us unselfish. I think closely attached to our perception of beauty is how we appreciate and learn to love both the inanimate and the animate in our world. Rowan Williams recently suggested that "We're most alive when we're discovering new and astonishing things about each other – it's what happens when people fall in love, of course, which is why love is for most of us the thing that more than anything else makes us feel alive." Beauty and love are perhaps the compelling means by which we are made to feel "most alive" and lead us in being somewhat engaged in our surroundings and with one and other, for the good of all. The old Sunday School hymn goes:

Think of a world without any flowers,
think of a wood without any trees,
think of a sky without any sunshine,
think of the air without any breeze:
we thank you, Lord, for flowers, trees and sunshine;
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

Think of a world without any people,
think of a street with no-one living there,
think of a town without any houses,
no-one to love and nobody to care:
we thank you, lord, for families and friendships;
we thank you, lord, and praise your holy name.

Bunty Newport (1927-)

Perhaps for us to be engaged this new year with our surroundings, seeing people as God created them as being of tremendous value, and the places where we live as wonderfully beautiful places, might help us become "better people" and act more generously towards one and other. Beauty might be in the eye of the beholder, but behold that all things are beautiful and worthy of our love, as we are worthy of being known as beautiful and well loved people ourselves. yB

Petertide Fair Memories

Anyone with memories from early Petertide Fairs is being urged to share them with the Fair organisers. They hope to create a 'Recollections section' in the Fair programme and on the Petertide Fair website. Please contact the Chairman, Judith Limbert on 01442 873626 or email chrichton@waitrose.com.

